UNCLE ISAAC

OR OLD DAYS IN THE SOUTH

WILLIAM DUDLEY POWERS

RECEIVED DELIVERED TO THE
AUG 8 1888
Library of Congress.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
Chap. PS 2649 Copyright No.
Shelf P85
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

UNCLE ISAAC:

OR

OLD DAYS IN THE SOUTH.

"ME AND MY REBECCY."

UNCLE ISAAC:

OR

Old Days in the South.

A REMEMBRANCE OF THE SOUTH.

By WILLIAM DUDLEY POWERS.

"I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night."—Psalms lxxvii, 6, 7.

RICHMOND:
B. F. JOHNSON PUBLISHING CO.
1899.

PS 2649
.P85

39460

COPYRIGHTED.

WILLIAM DUDLEY POWERS.

1899.

TWO COPIES RECEIVED.

JUL 22 1899

Register of Co

150 98

TO

HOWARD AND DUDLEY,

WITH THE WISH

THAT THEY MAY LOOK BACK ONE GENERATION BEHIND

THEIR FATHER'S

FOR

AN EXAMPLE AND AN INSPIRATION.

PREFACE.

Maturity had not marked the author of this volume for its victim—maturity means responsibility and care and labor—when the revolution in Southern life was had, and its recent fashions and ways were transferred to legend and song, and its exanimate factors to the philosophy of history. With the civil war the atony of a lost thunder trembled in the air, and a generation of Southern people felt that a Summer was ended. But a disappearing immaturity—of years—located him then in a time of life, when impressions are most securely fixed in memory's safest place. He has not forgotten, and not forgetting, he has fancied that he must remind those who may forget, of the glad and better things of the past, which may still follow life for good, and preserve something of the old inspirations for those who can get them only from one who does not forget.

"But how will the North take your book?" asked a friend, when the manuscript was read to him, and the question gave the publication pause. Reflection, however, brought the consciousness of the fact that the North was not over against the South, unfriendly. The North, the South, the East, and the West are the Union, and what is of value in history or tradition, and a pleasure of remembrance in one section must be of some value and of some charm to the whole country. The author had read with pleasant appreciation the idyls of New England, and it must be true that the New Englander will read with like satis-

faction the pastorals of the South. Then came the recollection of an incident, which as the interpretation of national friendship, that relationship which binds the people of the far separated sections together, convinced him that he need have no alarm about the sympathy of book-readers anywhere in the nation on this score.

Sitting one afternoon upon the porch of a hospitable house in Riverdale, where he had spent several happy days, the writer in reply to a requisition was tendered a match from a gold match case by his friend and host. The beauty of the case attracted him, and in the conversation which ensued, he learned that it had a story, and this is the story:

One morning toward the summer of 1865, a lady sent her card into the private office of a well-to-do New York gentleman. She was admitted. The gentleman, after courteously receiving her, asked to what he owed the honor of the call.

She replied, that she was a Southern lady in some distress, and had called to solicit his assistance.

Through the devastation incident upon the war, just closed, she added, she had been left with a plantation, but without seed or implements or mules, or money to purchase these necessary articles of equipment, and with no other possible source of support. Could she procure five hundred dollars, she was quite sure that she could make the plantation yield an income sufficient for the maintenance of her family, the payment of the interest, and presently for the liquidation of the debt. She then requested of him the loan of the five hundred dollars.

In utter astonishment at her request, he said: "Why, madam, I do not know you at all."

"I know that," she replied.

"Have you any security to offer me?"

"None, sir," she said.

"Then how can you expect me to advance you this money, and why do you apply to me?"

"Because," she answered, "I have heard that you are a generous, sympathetic man, and I believed you would appreciate my situation, and help me if you could. I am a lady, in much embarrassment; I must appeal to some one; I selected you. I will certainly return you the five hundred dollars with interest."

Something in her manner and speech, and the pathos of the situation prepossessed him to grant her most remarkable request, and in spite of the conviction that he was doing a probably very absurd thing, he lent her the money.

Year by year the interest was regularly paid, and after some years had passed, she called again at his office, returned him the principal, and presented him with this gold match case, asking him to keep it as a token of her appreciation of his kindness. She told him that she had taken some of her jewelry to Tiffany's, and out of it the match case had been made. On the top of the case there was engraved the name of "William H. Appleton." The name of a man given to such actions should be remembered with his deeds, and, therefore, in violation of his wish, doubtless, had it been asked, his name has been printed here.

With the remembrance of this instance of Northern generosity to a Southern appeal came the certain belief, that those of the family in the one part of the Union would be glad to know somewhat of the story of the family in the other, and that he who is there, while he might smile at the writer's simple pleasure, would look at his pictures in sympathy, criticising, it may be, the attempted literary work of a man, but not the happy facts of a life. So this book is published. *Dixi et salvavi animam meam.*

W. D. P.

Note.—The phonetics of the negro Dialect have been required to sustain some violence through the orthography used in this

book. But this has been done in order to facilitate an easy understanding among those readers who are not familiar with the tongue of this picturesque figure of the ancient regime. It should be borne in mind that the final "t" in such words as "warn't, ain't, don't," etc., is never sounded. The author finds his excuse for sacrificing the dialect in the benefit accruing to the unfamiliar reader.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

When and Where Uncle Isaac Lived.

Uncle Isaac's Christmas Recollections.

When Marse Ran' Got Kilt.

De Sundays an' De 'Ligion Dat is Gone.

Uncle Isaac's Experience With New Things.

Marse Ran's Hoss.

Uncle Isaac Has More Experience.

Uncle Isaac's Lament.

The Passing of Rebecca.

Uncle Isaac in the Song.

The Passing of Uncle Isaac.

The Old Song.

Mammy.

WHEN AND WHERE UNCLE ISAAC LIVED.

WHEN AND WHERE UNCLE ISAAC LIVED.

THE TRANSITIONS of civilization and the revolutions in social conditions are swifter than we wist. Not a great many years ago, as the older generation looks back, the last wearer of knickerbockers could be seen on his favorite stroll. He was an old gentleman then, it is true, with all the characteristics of his generation, but as with the stately tread of his day he walked down Cary street, he gave no consciousness of the fact that he was in any wise conspicuous. In his grave with him they buried the small clothes, the silk stockings, and the silver buckles, and the generation swept on to other fashions.

Age had hardly marked his successor, the wearer of the blue swallow-tail, with its brass buttons, and the red bandanna, for its victim, when again there was a change. A more intense crisis thrust itself upon a

people, and within the stretch of their every horizon wrought change. The substratum everywhere of government and society was made to feel a revolutionary touch, and as with the stern finger of fate it first destroyed every condition of the old life, it then undertook its reconstruction. Five years were consumed in its work, and when they had expired between these people and the past there was a great gulf fixed, and it was impassable. The old life was gone forever, a civilization was remodeled, and the spirit of Southern life had witnessed its own metempsychosis. All things were new.

But rapid indeed as has been this change, or these changes, the children of the fathers have easily become accustomed to them. The old days and their fashions and habits have been apparently all too soon fixed in history as prosaic facts of a mechanical record, the generation that is feels the force of the older life only through the law of heredity, and in the sentiment of the legend, and to those who had some part in their lingering peace and happiness there is left only the wake of a white remembrance, down which

they look and sigh. The past has become a "song in the night."

But those days and their civilization must stand for something, and that something must have its value. In them was the fashioning of those ancestors, and the people of to-day may be proud of them, who were the potent factors in the making of the nation, and who determined the early trend of the present life and character. In the nobler impulses now and the stronger integrity to which men hearken, there is the echo of a voice that has long been silent except in the echo.

For veer the heading as you will, transform the conditions, and shift the social structure to other concreted foundation, its past must still operate in the building character, remonstrate before questionable introductions, and stand for ideals. A nation's legends and traditions indicate the climb of its heights. The critics' sneer at the past, their condemnation of its thought when applied to this time of new movements, and the smile of these unwitting folk at their own fantastic stories of the older days, are travesties

upon the philosophy of history, and treason to that which should have ordered a notable loyalty. More than this, the intensity which they have sometimes exhibited in their adverse reflections have created the suspicion that the underlying motive was not sincere, and the attempt was not so much to reach just conclusions and to impress them as to tickle a majority, who were supposed, and similarly unjustly, to be without sympathy for the past of these people, and inexorably arrayed against all their previous life and character. The immediate inspiration, one cannot help but suspect, was the fancied sight of a demoralized market adapted to and ready for the sale of such dishonest stuff.

Never for a moment has any man had cause to be ashamed for the fathers' past or the high demands in those days of their chivalry, generosity, and refinement. Nor must the heritage be lost. It is worth too much. But history will not preserve its precious facts for us as they really were, nor let them move among us forcefully as factors or with any accompanying enthusiasm. History is cold and its facts

are chilled. Life-building factors must be warm with a soul-inspiration if they shall affect us for good. And if these factors be flown out of history that soul-inspiration must needs be the sentiment of their day, a sentiment persuaded into action by legend and the unworded epic of a reverenced ancestry. Sentiment is poetry, and poetry is that impulse of life that makes the toiler sing as he toils. Facts without sentiment are dead things. So it shall not be so much the historian as the singer with his truth in romance, who shall best set to work among us, and perpetuate for that work, the reminiscences of our forefathers, which are good and worth the memory.

Something has already been done along this line, but genius has yet a well-nigh ungarnered field in which he may gather, and from which he may vehicle the ideals of the South's past in the romance of literature. The writer of this bit of a volume recognizes in himself no ability to perform any such task. But he dares to undertake to give a detail or two of that old life that is gone, which with its full story he would fain have fresh in the memory of the South

forever, and whose exquisite simplicity, the simplicity of a very real refinement, cannot help but aid and purify our civilization and culture in this luff of its destiny. In even in a bit of recollection there is, for some of us at least, something of the sweet things of the past.

Not far from the banks of the Appomattox the old house stands. It was built in the early days of the century, but it has grown much since its original owner died, and in obedience to the exactions of a constantly unsatisfied hospitality, until it has reached the edge of the hill. Its rooms are large and many, and its halls, sometimes broad and sometimes narrow, follow no straight line as they lead to the various chambers and reception rooms. The green room is here, around the first angle is the blue, further on still is the red room, and above and to the left is the haunted room. It was always haunted. Certainly in the remembrance of all who knew the house the fact that it was haunted had long been fixed. Every occupant of that room had been initiated into fright by queer murmurs and well breathed sighs. There was

evidently an uncanny resident in that room, and the family became so accustomed to his continuance that his freakish sounds were catalogued among the natural noises of the household. They were all wont from time to time to fall asleep in the midst of his peculiarities.

A trellis of roses enclosed the front porch, and to the fore lay a circle of hollyhocks, princess feather, touch-me-nots, roses, violets, and heart's-ease. Around these flowers the roadway, roughly macadamized with a crystal rock, wound to the avenue of oaks and poplars, sentineled by a tall pine, the landmark of all the countryside, and out and beyond, the avenue between fields of the golden grain, or staccatoed with the green of Virginia's staple. On the other side of the house the grove sloped up to the shadowing of the eaves, and separating it from the garden spread a hundred yards or so in either direction. Squirrels populated it, who were sufficiently intimate to accept anything in the shape of squirrel luxury offered them by the children.

From any door a fascinating scene developed.

Large oaks scattered through the unfenced yard cast a velvet shade on the grass in the day, or at night sifted the moonlight. Oh, those oaks! How many thousand watermelons, ice-cold, have been tasted in that shade! That's the recollection coming from the boy. How many times the story, the old, old story, has been told in that shade, and listened to! That's the reminiscence of a little later day. How many a game of backgammon and of chess has been played there! That's the remembrance of the old exile. Down the vista between the oaks the symmetrical pines, here and there, straightened themselves above the gold of the wheat and the green of the tobacco, and near the tracery of a winding thread of darker green the brook chaunted. But they called it then the "branch."

Turning within, the floor lay mellowed, dark, and polished like glass. Woe to the urchin who forgot to wipe his feet on the door mat before he trod that dry-rubbed hall! A calamity of malediction fell upon him did the matron or the butler prove or severely suspect him the culprit. It was generally a nuisance

to him, and in rainy weather, when the red mud showed plainly, an abomination. Parlor and dining room, and chambers as well, save when the carpets or mattings were down, had the same care and polish.

Here the family lived and entertained, and rare was the day when the breakfast or the dinner table was without a guest, and rare was the night when no guest occupied a chamber in that house. For to call in those days meant to stay at least a night and a portion of a day. They are all well-nigh gone now, that old family and its contemporaries, generous and hospitable, true and brave and gentle. This is just a memory of them.

The tall, lithe father, who smiled in conscious pleasure when the opportunity to welcome a guest occurred, is gone. Strong in the integrity of true character, he was stern before all wrong, and gentle at all other times. About him hovered a family's affection, the neighborhood was the residence of his friends, and near him stood the colored folk as in the presence of a friend. The cabins and the house alike loved and reverenced him. He was a scholarly pro-

duct of the University, and courteous with an ancient courtesy, devoted to those who loved him or were dependent upon him. Every night he sat in the parlor before the great fireplace concealed in the summer behind the graceful foliage of the asparagus, where, surrounded by family and guest, he read the Holy Word of God and sped a prayer heavenward. His was a character shaped by a chivalrous generation, taught of the scholars, and refined in the impulses of the Christian Religion.

Matching the man was the matron, and noble the husband noble the wife. They have folded her hands, and she too is asleep. They were chivalry and purity wedded. A twain made one. Stately in her motions, and gentle in her manners she graced the house, and in the charming delicacy of the ways that belonged to her day and generation the gentleman found his inspiration to gallantry and honor. No impure thing met the eyes of her daughters in the home and conversation that in any degree dangerously approached the questionable was impossible where she reigned the soul of refinement. Her sons

must needs have been gentlemen, and her daughters could be naught but maidens made fair by the touch of such modesty and refinement.

There are yet many in this day of fret and hurry—why may it not be said, many of us? It cannot be wrong or impolite to put one's self in the company of which he is proud—aye, many of us, who can look back and see them as they sat with us on the rose-scented porch or rambled pleasantly down the avenue. Their white muslin with the waist ribbon of blue was enough of attractive gowning for them, and no additional ornament to the flower caught in the brown hair was needed. We walked with innocence when we walked with them, and a true gentility could have had no happier inspiration. They were the touch of a high civilization.

In the evening after prayers, man and girl, they sang the ballads of that day. Perhaps no appreciable description of those evenings can be given until the genius comes, but we can hear again, some of us, I know, those sweet voices interpret "Robin Adair," "Coming Thro' the Rye," and "O Don't You Re-

member Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt." It may be that the rendition was not scientific, nor even classical, but it was exquisite in its witchery of purity, and winning in the fresh melody of the girl whose soul had been taught in the always chaunting nave of Nature. The men were their brothers, and the men were gentlemen.

These were the ladies and the men who were to make, in the opportunities of patriotism and where the battle joined, the fame of a chivalry, and the record of a courage which the world shall never forget. Where the little star-crossed guidon is found, torn and shot-marked, there is the token of the strength of that inspiration and the sign of that gallant bearing. They were the sweet spirits that urged men to glory, and they were the grey clad heroes of an everlasting remembrance.

Behind the house and down the slope of the hill the gravelled way led toward the spring—sweet spring where the evening sun often found boy and girl, or man and maiden drinking the cool water, and merry in conversation. Perhaps they were a bit in-

clined to words of dearer import sometimes—and who could resist the romance of such scenes in that contented, white day of the Sunny South?

The oaks stretched their branches over the walk. A dozen steps from the last door fetched the fringe of cedars, another passed them, and there on one side stood Mary Cæsar with her churn full of buttermilk ready for any boy or girl who had brought a cup along. Close to her was the dairy and the ice-house, and across the way the kitchen. Over its fireplace, in which a rail went without forcing, Uncle Nat, a real bit of polished, animated ebony, reigned supreme, and who for the asking, with a word of hospitality spoken in the negro's quaint way, but learned from the generous master, stood as ready to give a hoe-cake, the natural accompaniment to Mary Cæsar's buttermilk, but the making of which is now a lost art and the meal of which it was made, rich and sweet, is gone as well.

The people of to-day would stand in amazement in that ancient kitchen. Its pot-hooks, its ovens with their coal-covered lids, the roasting pig, the

broiling mutton, the baking ham, the basting fowl, the innumerable things that were ever appetizing and creating a longing for dinner, and above all the old white-crowned, black face shining in a natural polish, with its unmistakably tyrannical voice, but bent to hospitable intention—don't you wish you were back there and hungry? The beaten way widened past the kitchen, invading, on both sides, the ground once belonging to grass. It was worn by many a year of marble-playing boys, and by many a night's double shuffle and back-stepping when old John, with his banjo, was coaxed into the light of the full moon. Thence it wound hard by the smoke-house full of bacon, hams and shoulders and sides, a rich, old greasy treasure house. Its mate, in which the groceries for a couple of hundred or more people were stored, stood over against it across the road. Now the narrowing road, crossed with many a path and intersection, rambled among the cabins of the colored folk, the vassals—vassals, yes, and happy. Clean and neat these cabins were, and marked with the sign of contentment.

So the wandering took the stroller by Uncle Julius' home, and to the door of Lucy's and Peyton's, where the boys, in a time of unusual hunger, went to persuade a treat of scrambled eggs and hoe-cake, and to the spring. Cool and clear it bubbled in the shade of the pines in the dell at the foot of the three hills, hills that were dotted with the homes of the quiet colored folk of the old times. The bath house stood on one side, and the wheat waved out of sight on the other. Could the moving shadows that play between the spring and the tobacco barn repeat the stories to which they listened in that old time, they would delight us with many a scrap of lovely romance.

Along the path around the hill, and a mile away, the waters of the Appomattox, river of the sad history, run under the cotton-woods and the willows, and sometimes boisterously over the rocks. Between the river and the spring are the lowgrounds. In the evening through their bordering pines once there came the drifting song of the hands as they wound their way homeward. It was a quaint old song they

sang, and in it was content, and the note of the coaxing rest of the closing day.

A sharp turn out of the head of the avenue and a hundred or more yards away stood the stable in its ample yard. Its double doors, always ajar, opened a vista of stalls filled with riding and driving horses, and rows of mules, whose crunching of the corn was interrupted by the whinny of the satisfied guest. Parallel with it ran the long crib. In the front of this building, on a winter's night, a great pile of corn would sometime lie, and in it and on it a crowd of black folk shucking, the pannikin of whiskey passing a little too frequently, perhaps. A cheerful scene it was withal, softly noisy with the strange aria of their monologue of music, and a picture of glee and of toil without conscious sweat.

Along the road-side from the avenue to the granary, peach and apple trees grew, and here and there, were scattered in the fields, which, barring a late frost, afforded fruit for all during the summer. But two miles away is the orchard, and its hornets' nests, and its green apples, and the battle, and the flight—

not of the hornets. Then a reach of aromatic pines, and the lake and the mill. On the top of the red hill is the granary where the threshing and the garnering were had, and from its rick of straw radiated the paths down which the boys were wont to hurry in the early morning all excited in the examination of the hare traps, and the securing of the spoil.

"Rosemary, that's for remembrance."

It is morning. The mists are curling up from the river. The grey touches the dark horizon of the East. Beneath the big yard oak, the master winds the clear note of the horn, and from the cabins by hill and dale the contented hands go to their several occupations. The hours creep on toward well past the sunrise, and the "Good Mornings" greet one and another of the family and the guests like a benediction. Such indeed they are. The julep—smack your lips O! connoisseur, in a nectareous reminiscence—or the toddy is served by the butler, old and courteous, proud of his lineage—he and the family are one in aristocratic right—which is, in his opinion, suf-

ficiently indicated by his swallow-tailed coat and brass buttons, and emphasized by a mannerism that defies imitation. It is in him grotesque perhaps, but the accurate counterpart of the gentleman whom he serves.

The morning passes swiftly along. The matron metes out the rations, enough and to spare, and orders the dinner, and settles herself to that superintendence in general that constitutes the rest of her pleasant domestic responsibility. The gentleman rides to the fields, and in chat and stroll, and it may be with a wistful glance revealing the refining motion of a tender passion the younger people forget the slipping hours. But before that those girls have done their assigned duties in the household, and have surely read a chapter in the Holy Bible.

Then across field and stream the winding horn sounds the fact of noon, and luncheon, and rest. But not luncheon, "snack." Dinner it is in the fields, under the shade of the walnut or the peach. The ash-cake, the rich, red gravy, the broiled bacon, and the molasses tickle the appetite, and the ice-cold

buttermilk, the champagne of Virginia, washes it all down. Certain remembrances are synonymous with sacred hunger.

Again the sweep and swish of the cradles in the wheat is heard, and the weird chant sturdily sung of the rivals as they give themselves enthusiasm and encouragement, and the chorus in which, under the self-appointed and cordially recognized leader, all join, cradlers, binders, and children. The bay of a hound interrupts the chant and Molly Cotton-tail exploiting her fright bolts across the stubble. Down drops the cradle, the sheaf, the bundle, over turns the half made shock, and away go they all in the hurry of the chase.

Around the angles of the halls, the dinner bell summons to the dining room. But that dinner need not be described here, the aroma of Uncle Nat's kitchen has already escaped, and besides Uncle Isaac will, by and by, give his happy recollections of that meal, and still again, as he would say, it would make you too "hongry." Then followed the *dolce far niente* of the Southern plantation. It was the time of the

nap, or the time to read, or to write for the evening's mail.

The hours skip again, and the day gets softer. The gentlemen are gathering from the fields and woods, new guests are riding down the avenue, and the house is exiling the family reconciled by the evening air. The trees are beginning their songs, the flow of the river is slowing, the swallows make high merriment, the hogs are driven from the acorn mast of the forest toward the pen, the sheep drift toward the cooler parts of the pasture, and from the stable the neigh of the horse falls into the harmony. They walk, these sweet Southern folk, they sing again, they speak soft whispered words along the avenue, the bench under the maple listens to a story told often there before. It is so beautiful. It is so quiet. It is so winning. The glad days of the "long ago" tempt one out of the right line and the writing of a book's chapter into soliloquy.

Oh, Dee, come look again into this old face with those beautiful eyes! Oh, Nan, come romp a bit down the path, we will frighten the covey out of

their nest once more! Oh, Cousin Alice, sing again "Ben Bolt"! Peyton, saddle the horses once again, and let us ride through Ocmulgee to where the red fox runs! Come boys, and as in the old days "*lets*" ride the dawn away. Who'll bring the trophy home? Hark, hark, hark-a-way Music, and Fashion, Black Dick, and Rover! Jolt us along the road Isaac, to the old Brick Church or to Grub Hill, and we will worship as before in "sincerity and truth." What is ten miles to Church! It will be an all-day meeting. Everybody will be there. We will dine out of the basket on the grass in the woods again!

II.

The civilization of the ancient regime in the South was a picturesque civilization. A feudalism there was, it is true, and projected into the nineteenth century, but a feudalism stripped of those conditions, which, making it cruel, had exiled it from the older countries, and now so modified by that spirit of gentleness which makes everything great that it furnished the unique opportunity for that life in the Southern States which charmed all who touched it. Ruling in this feudalism, the Southern people were a refined and hospitable people, and their land was quiet, content, and happy. Whether then it were right or wrong this feudalism produced that which is gone and may never return, a picturesque life filled with romance and peace. In those days there was a knight-errantry as gallant and as true as when the lady's glove was caught in the steel headgear of the cavalier, and the winning graces of the lady were a stateliness of generous courtesy that compelled a willing respect

as it made plain a genuine cordiality of welcome hospitality. And when those days were departed, they had well-nigh buried the cavaliers. Their generation was also of the past. Their social system and their notion of the sovereignty of government they believed ideal. But whether or no that was true, what fetched so beautiful a life could not then have been all wrong.

Touch those times and you have touched a high impulse of humanity. Go back to them and you breathe in an atmosphere of gentle refinement. Few can recall a fair cheek then mantled with shame, and rare was the man, the gentleman, who at sometime had not found an inspiration to chivalry in the gentle character and sweet purity of the Southern maiden. Like the music of birds, we believe, was the life in the Southland.

There were vassals, but the vassal was loved by the lord of the manor. The lady so refined and gentle that the caste feeling was forgotten, met and touched and spoke to those who must come and go at her bidding in such manifest friendship that the tie which bound them one to the other was that of affection

rather than that of ownership. On the plantation there was an *esprit du corps* which was as strong among the one caste as among the other. This feudalism, which, in large part made the South characteristically the South, was a poetic thing, without tyranny, and working no wrong, save where men were bad, and bad men will be, and bad men will disturb any relationship.

Perhaps, doubtless the institution of slavery was an error lingering in the land. Its time of correction had not come, and in so far as that was true it was still doing a good work. But was it an error? The rationale of history rather persuades us to believe it a factor in a progressing civilization, disappearing when its task was done. Regard it as you will, it was, in these days of which we think, a factor in the process of development of the people, who are made the subject of much pity, pity which they did not either seek or appreciate, and for which they knew no occasion. Strange as this may appear, it is true. It had taken them out of the crassest moral turpitude, separated them from barbarism, and placed them

in the school of civilization, with all its possibilities of destiny before them. It may have been one of the "growing pains" of humanity's upward struggle. But, be it what it may, it gave the slave his opportunity now in full fruition, and it was a potent factor in the old life of the South.

The chivalry and the gentility of the land was perpetuated in some degree by the conditions which naturally environed such a system, but it was in no wise fictitious. These exquisite elements of society had been brought to the South by the near descendants of English and Scottish belted knights and those of the sturdy yeomen who fought under them. The Huguenots had given them a vivacious strain, and in the Spotswoods, the Randolphs, the Lees, the Fairfaxes, and many another family of like position what had been natural with them across the waters was of necessity natural with them in Virginia.

But since glimpses are likely to leave wrong impressions about that not emphasized in them, it must be borne in mind that this life in the older days of the

South was not spent in wastral dissipation or idleness. There was no laziness, either of thought or action. On the nation's register of fame Southern names are largely written, and on the record of good works there are wages to their credit. When the republic had need of statecraft Southern men along such lines did noble work. The Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the accomplishments of the first Congresses testify to that. Nor may the country ever forget or ignore, whatever the critic may say, or however he may sneer, the notable works of Jefferson, Marshall, Clay, Calhoun, Toombs, and Hill, and many another of ability and usefulness. When in the time of war she made requisition for soldiers, the South showed no lack and could feel no shame for her furnishment. Washington, Andrew Jackson, Scott, Thomas, Lee, and Stonewall Jackson are men of national and of international reputation as of Southern birth. Not by any means is there intimation of any foolish exaltation in this, or that the North did not do her portion of the work or send to the nation's legislatures and the nation's wars men

who, distinguishing themselves, gave the nation a right to be proud. That was true, too. But a sketch of a bit of landscape does not require a description of the earth, and in this brief note of a speck of Southern life the omission of any mention of those other portions of the Union must not at all imply a criticism or neglect of them.

Nor may the South be taunted with a lack of place in literature. A reading people may be as literary as those who write, and what the authors published, the South bought and read. Books then, and especially the standard ones, were channeled more steadily from the publishing houses to the Southern gentleman's study, perhaps, than now. When this era closed the Southern man was just recovering from the idea inherited from his ancestors, that it ill became a gentleman to sell books. He therefore did not care to write. But it had its literature. In the polemics of political economy more than one Southern man showed himself at home, and easily the peer of his contemporaries. Sometime the sweet spirit of song inspired a Southern soul, whose music has not died.

Such were Edgar Allen Poe, Henry Timrod, and Sydney Lanier, and others, and a long list of writers of desultory poems, many of which were gems, and stood as exponents of the possibilities of Southern poets. The Southern Literary Magazine, when ruined and stopped by the civil war, had established for itself both a place and a support in its particular field. Sometime as well, the field of romance was gleaned by a Southern gleaner, witness the Partisan, The Scout, Katherine Walton, and some others of William Gilmore Simms. In his Woodcraft there is a rich vein of humor, and Porgy is a creation of which any writer might be proud. And in the more sober and stronger works some goodly tasks were done. That it did not do more in literary work is not surprising. The conditions of its society, and the notions fixed upon it in the past forbade. But these thoughts belong to the historian, and really had no place in this little book's intention. It only desired to go back to a spot in the past, when Uncle Isaac and his ilk lived and loved.

Would that its readers and its writer could have

been taken there in the coach with its folding steps, and its boot for the guest's or the family's trunk, the seat on which the boy's surreptitious ride was so often pleasantly secured. But the coach, too, is gone with the knickerbockers, the swallow-tail, Uncle Isaac and his gentle folk of that day.

But Uncle Isaac shall posthumously tell of these days himself, and what he says is true. His testimony may not be impeached.

It is quite true that that requires a considerable draft upon the credulity of some people, but many there are yet who will give him all necessary corroboration. In the mouth of many witnesses what he says may be established. Indeed the incredulous are incredulous only because they did not take advantage of the opportunity, once afforded, to see, or lived too late to see him and his people, or have been persuaded into skepticism by inaccurate, if not untrue, narrators of his story.

In that picturesque life in the South his reality, the butler, was a conspicuously picturesque figure. Uncle Julius Cæsar it was in the country, Uncle Miles

in the city, and who that knew them can fail to remember them? He had all of the aristocratic notions of his master, shared in the pride of the family, and excelled in a gratifying pomposity. He was largely impressed with his responsibility for the family's honor, and the courtliness of his welcome at the door never failed to impress the visitor. His etiquette embroidering his character with something over much like tinsel to the stranger was a genuine article, and a real finish to a real personality—a species of Southern dilettanteism in hyperbole. Many were the functions and much was the authority that he arrogated to himself without contradiction or rebuke, and this had continued until both he and others became reconciled to his assumptions, and half way recognized them as his right. And nothing was more noticeable in this connection than the constitution of himself as the instructor of all other servants in matters of decorum, and as the teacher of the children in what he denominated "good manners." The apprentice to the butler had a severe curriculum and

a stern task-master. In fact of Uncle Julius Cæsar, or "Daddy," all stood in considerable awe.

"Howcum you use dat sort ob languidge now, Marse Charley? Don't you kno' you oughtn't to talk in no sich ob a way? Hit 'tain't perlite, an' yo' Par would be mighty mad ef he knowed about hit. You ought to be shame ob yo'sef', dat's what you ought to be, an' I don't want to hear you talk in no sich ob a way agin. Young fokes ob yo' quality ought to 'spress demselves in a gin'rous 'zaggeration, Sar," was the fashion of frequent speech on his part with which the younger generation was entirely familiar.

"I cuarn't bar to see you stickin' yo' fingers in dat dar jar ob sarbes, Miss Kate, I'm so sorry I'm mos' estressed dat I cotched you. Lordy, Lordy, dat a chile ob yo' Mar should do sich ob a thing! How cum you chilluns cuarn't larn de fashionables' manners what nat'rully belongs to you? De tarpretations ob somethings is pas' my complehensions." And so the young lady, not yet in her teens, escaped no more easily than her brother.

"In de name ob Common Sense, Marse Jeems, why don't you wipe yo' feet on de mat befo' de do' befo' you come into de house? Dat flo' was scoured dis mornin', an' Becky is spent a whole hour a dry-rubbin' ob hit. Jes' look a dar at what you is done done to de hall flo'. Hit's farly spilt. Yo' Par is a gempman, an' yo' Mar is a high quality lady, and yit somehow or nother you don't 'pear to heritages nar one ob de manners dat is rejoined to dat breedin'." So Marse Jeems was scolded more than once.

But for any of the family he would have laid down his life. Often he was a hero, and whenever threatened danger called for heroic action he was equal to it.

The affection of the black Mammy for her white "chile" had no limitation, and it was honestly reciprocated. It manifested itself in a devoted courage and in intense signs, but it was altogether likely to be somewhat exclusively her particular child's.

Once when the nursery of the writer and of his younger brother was afire, Mammy Grace rushed into the smoke, snatched her boy from his bed, and

carried him safely down the stairs, leaving the younger boy in his burning crib. She did not wish him to burn, but the intensity of her anxiety centered her efforts on a single idea, and that was the rescue of her "chile."

The little girl as naturally returned her Mammy's kiss as she so saluted her mother, and the boy was not one whit more ashamed, similarly to express his affection or his gratitude for something done. There was nothing in her power the Mammy would not do for these children, and always with the sincerest token of pleasure. But this devotion of the colored people to their owners, and its reciprocation as well, was one of the remarkable and unique features of this old Southern life.

When the old Mistress of a South Carolina plantation died, one of her shawls was given to the old Mammy. It was treasured. Subsequently when the dispersion of the family, in the attempt to recover a livelihood, occurred, this shawl was divided into many pieces and distributed by her to the numerous old servants, who, in turn subdivided their portions

among their children. Some years afterward, persuaded by the recollections of home, one of the sons of this lady returned to the plantation. In his conversation with a son of one of the former servants, the young colored man told him, that all of the plantation colored people who had died since his departure had been buried with a piece of " ole Miss' shawl " in their coffin, and that he still had his piece—the last of the shawl—given him by his mother, which he was keepin for his own burial. There may have been a bit of fetich worship in this, but no iconoclast would like to disturb it, and it was a splendid mark of a lasting love.

The drastic calls of war took nearly all of the men to the front, and the ladies and children were left almost entirely in the charge of the colored people of the plantation. In many instances there was not a gentleman within miles of the place, and yet these ladies and children remained there without fear, without even a suspicion of uneasiness so great was their confidence in their colored friends. Nor were they in the slightest peril. They were watched over

and cared for as by anxious affection. The crops were planted and harvested, and the plantation was looked after by the colored folk, if not always successfully, at least, to the best of their ability. When the Proclamation of Emancipation was declared it wrought no change in the colored people or in their family relationship, or in their strict conception of responsibility. Really they did not wish their freedom, and not infrequently the purpose of the kind master to emancipate his slaves was, by them, strenuously resisted. The identity of a slave with the family to which he belonged gave him, in his opinion, a higher position socially than that occupied by the free negro. He was accustomed, therefore, to look down upon what he called a "free nigger," and to resent any proposition to so degrade him. This is no argument for slavery, but it was the fact, and it made that condition of affection, which fastened happiness in the South. In all that time of struggle and deprivation and poverty incident upon the war there is no record, so far as one Southern man knows, of any disloyalty or desertion on their part. It was

wonderful and no greater test of sincere attachment could be made.

Butter became a thing of ancient recollection, bacon gravy grew thin and thinner, and then just a trifle rancid. Flour was scarce, corn meal expensive, salt could be had only of the government, shoes were too high priced to buy, and clothes must be made, and the material thereof often must be found on the plantation. The young and the old master staid at the front and in the perpetual battle, where the wages were some thirteen dollars a month, and flour twelve hundred dollars a barrel, and calico, perhaps, fifty dollars a yard. There had to be suffering at the home. But at home the colored people continued, helped, and suffered with the family. They were always faithful. Faithful always, that is enough to say of them. It was heroic.

Others of them in the time of unhappy war showed themselves in other ways as devoted and as heroic. The negro then was not brave. It was not expected that he should be. But when the young master, who was permitted to take his servant, went with his

regiment, his colored servant, his loving friend, went with him. In the severity of the camp life he lived unmurmuringly. He was satisfied to be near his master, and no one had greater concern about the welfare of the young soldier than his colored body-guard.

"Don't you be a gwine up dar in de front ob dis here fight, Marse Ran', dem who is behin' is gwine hab plenty ob fightin' befo' dis here battle is ober. Jes' wait 'twell yo' time comes. Hit 'tain't no use ob gittin' kilt de fus' thing. I'm gwine to be a watchin' ob you," was the somewhat sophistical advice of Isaac. Yet no one would have been more disgraced and distressed had his Marse Ran' showed anything of the white feather.

But something of all this will occur in Uncle Isaac's recollections. We know something of the time of his life, and where it was lived, and its conditions. That is enough. Let him, for the rest of this book, tell his own stories. He and his times are only a remembrance now. A remembrance like the fragrance of violets along the pathway of the absent

years. This is the fashion of his reminiscence: and if in it he be found a partisan of a pronounced type, bear with him even then, because his partisanry was an expression of his rare affection, and a sign of a rare loyalty.

UNCLE ISAAC'S CHRISTMAS RECOLLECTIONS.

"MISS KATIE."

UNCLE ISAAC'S CHRISTMAS RECOLLECTIONS.

Now dis here Chris'mus ain't like what our Chris'mus use to be,
When white fokes warn't no sarbents, an' de niggers warn't set free.
You set down dar Marse Charley, an' you set right dar Miss Kate,
An' den I'm gwine to tell you 'bout ole Chris'mus in dis state.
You kno' dis is Virginny, old Virginny is her name,
An' whar dey use to hab sich good things 'twas a sin an' shame.
Dis state warn't like dem odder states up Norf or way down Souf,
We neber had much sno' an' ice, an' hardly eber drouf.

De rain was plenty for de crap, an' ice enuff would
come
To las' us through de Summer in our ole Virginny
home.
Den corn an' wheat an' hogs an' sheep was plenty
all de year,
An' turkeys gobbled in a way you always like to hear.
Dar ain't no use a talkin' for hit always was a fac'
Dat eb'rybody use to lub a ole Virginny snac'.
Dat hoe-cake an' dat 'lasses an' dat ole time butter-
milk
De chilluns eat upon de lawn, dat lawn as fine as
silk—
Hit raly was de bestis' time dis country eber see.
'Twas good enuff for any fokes, an' twict too good
for me.
I ain't gwine tell you 'bout de dinners dat we sarbed
each day,
Case you cuarn't 'preciate all de things ob dat ole
fashion way.
But 'twas de grandes' libbin' dat dis worl' did eber
see.

How cum dem Yankees come down here an' set de niggers free?
De niggers dat was happy from de time dat dey was born,
A cradlin' in de wheatfiel' an' a shuckin' ob de corn,
Is beggin' an' a stealin' for to git dem sump'n to eat—
Deir bacon is all rancid, an' de 'lasses hit ain't sweet.
I sho' misstan' dat bus'ness from de las' unto de fus',
A comin' to Virginny an' a both'rin' arter us.
Who axed dem for to come down here dat's what I want to kno'.
Dey's done upsot de good ole life an' ruined hit for sho'.
But I ain't tole you 'bout de Chris'mus what we had dem days,
When we was doin' eb'rything in dem ole fashion ways.
'Twas Chris'mus sho', Marse Charley, an' 'twas Chris'mus sho', Miss Kate.

Our hogs mos' come to killin' an' de fish didn't want
no bait.
De lan' was full ob music, an' de banjo couldn't stop,
An' eb'ry face was smilin' like a bright tobacker crop.
December twenty-fif' is always Chris'mus day you
kno',
But dey begins deir preparations sev'rul weeks befo'.
Dere was mo' chop an' choppin' ob raw meat an'
mutten suet,
An' spice an' raisins jes' as good, an' didn't we fokes
all knew it!
Anodder thing—'twas roun' an' green—dey use' to
cut an' slice,
What for you call dat thing? Any'ow hits tas'e was
mighty nice.
Cit— Cit—, Yes, sho's you born Miss Kate, I had
mos' done forgit,
Lor' me, for sartin Ma'm, you 'members right, Citrun,
dat's hit!
Den sich a bakin' an' a bakin' ob dem cakes an'
pies,

Hit make yo' mouf a leetle branch dat run out ob yo' eyes
Dey pickled all de oyshters dat a one hoss team could tote,
An' out'n de pen dey picked an' took de bery fattes' shote.
Dey killed de souf-down mutton, an' dat ole time fatted calf,
Dat would a made a prodigal forgit hesef' an' laf'.
Dar was de bigges' turkey an' hit mout be too a goose—
Hit looked jes' like de 'bundance ob de erf was turned a loose.
Dey gathered in de taters, an' a possum, hit warn't scace,
An' all poke sassage dat was mos' elicious to de tas'e.
An' sarbes an' jelly, puddin' too, an' all dat sorter stuff.
Hit seemed jes' like dem good ole fokes, dem days, couldn't hab enuff.
Ole Whiskey was a ribber, an' ole Brandy was a branch,

Dat flowed to de plantation in a stream you could'nt stanch.
Ole Marster made hit into punch an' what we called Aig Nog—
Ef you had mixed hit wid de vict'ls you would a made a bog.
An' apple toddy, which I kno' is mighty good to drink,
An' gits yo' hade to thinkin' 'twell hit don't kno' what to think.
Den out de cellar wid de cobweb an' de dus' dey brung
De wine from ole Madeery, an' dat odder—Now I'm hung
Ef I remimbers what's hits name, 'twas Shurry, I belieb,
Which sifted through yo' stomick like fine flour through a sieb,
An' riz, an' riz untwell hit struck de center ob yo' brain,
An' splendid made one single night, but nex' day dar was pain.

Oh me, dem blessed juleps wid de mixeture ob grass,
I knowed dey was among de things dat was too good to las'!
I hear de carridge comin' down de poplar abenue—
Dem hosses is Marse Peytonses, his grey mars Suk an' Sue;
I kno' deir trot. Jes' hear dem now a comin' in dis way,
Jes' like dey warn't no hoss but fokes an' knowed 'twas Chris'mus Day.
An' yonder come anodder, dat's yo' modder an' yo' Par,
He was a Cornfed sojer an' got wounded in de war.
I bet you in dat carridge is Miss Julia an' Miss Ann,
An' dat young brodder dat is dade, my po' young Marster Ran'.
A heap mo' fokes is comin'. Cuarn't you hear de hosses trot?
A-booker an' a-booker, dat's anodder hoss-back lot:
Marse Joe, yo' cousin Simon, an' Marse Willyum from de Vale—

Dar ain't no een to all de fokes dat figgers in dis tale.
Yo' Gran'pa an' yo' Gran'ma, an' yo' sickly Uncle Bill
Is standin' on de big front poach a beck'nin' up de hill.
Den sich a fussin' an' a kissin' you ain't nebber seen,
An' eb'ry kiss dat dem fokes gib you sho' a kiss dey mean.
An' eb'ry chile ob dat big fambly, all ob dem was dar,
De boys drest up in Sunday close, de girls wid curly har.
Jerusalum, it was a sight dat made you jump an' cheer!
No Ma'm, Miss Kate, you couldn't a stood hit mo' den onct a year.
Den in de house whar was de Chris'mus tree dey all would go—
Hit sot inside de parlor near de middle ob de flo'.
'Twas kivered wid some shiny stuff, an' on mos' all de limbs
Was red an' yaller candles sot in lubly golden rims.

An' on dat tree was sump'thin' sho' for eb'ry chile an' man.
De ole fokes, an' de chilluns, an' for eb'ry maid an' han'.
No, I cuarn't tell you what dey got, for all dem girls an' boys
In heap les' time den I can tell was plum armful ob toys.
De grown fokes too was smilin' an' dey showed dat dey was glad,
For eb'rything dey fotched dem down was what dey wished dey had.
Unk' Jule would git a Kercheefer, an' Andrew'd git a hat,
Ole Nancy'd git a apron, an' dar was sump'n too for Nat,
Unk' Cæsar'd hab a pa'r ob boots, an' Sis would git a doller,
An' dem black fokes would git so glad dey couldn't hep' but holler.
A-clang, a-clang, a-clanger, now dey'd ring de dinner bell,

But, Naw Sar, 'bout dat dinner I'm a not a gwine to tell.
'Twould make you bofe too awful hongry—Dar I yearn you laf!
I clar I couldn't escriber hit, I couldn't escribe one haf'.
A lis' ob all dey eat dat day an' all de wine dey drank
Would take a mem'ry bigger'n mine. I clar 'twould take a tank
To hole dat wine an' cordjuls, Sar, an' as for what dey eat,
'Twould put ten men a hystin' hit into a mortal sweat.
Why, Lord-a marcy, Marster sho', you fokes ob now-a-days
Cuarn't pos'bul understan' how in de oler timer ways
We libbed, an' eat, an' drinked, an' lubbed, an' made dis life a song,
When eb'rything was 'zactly right, an' nuffin', Sar, 'peared wrong.
An' ef I tole you 'bout dat dinner, an' I darred to try,

You wouldn't belieb hit 'twas a fac', but think hit 'twas a lie.
" Git partners," now de cry would come, for " Chris'-mus eb'nin's dance."
An' you ought'r seen dem chilluns how dey den would ra'r an' prance.
De ole fokes go mo' slo' you kno', fus' dis way an' den dat,
A noddin' to de music an' a keepin' up a chat.
Dar warn't no pianners an' horns dat dance for us to play,
We neber had dat sort er tune for us on Chris'mus Day,
But music from de banjo an' a jinin' to de fiddle—
" Dar, take yo' place, Chassay, Forw'd Fo', Cross ober through de middle!"
Ole John would sing, " O dearest May," *Hum, Hum,* " Wid eyes so bright."
" Now balunce all, Salute yo' partners," *Pang Pung,* " Ladies right!"
How dat ole banjo'd plunk an' pling, an' how dat fiddle'd sing,

Hit made deir souls come in deir feet an' cut de pidgeon wing.
But night would come an' darkness settle on de happy sky,
When on de poach dey'd go agin an' say de sweet "Good-bye."
An' some would be a laffin' an' den some would shed a tear,
For who could tell what was gwine come befo' anodder year.
An' dat was all our Chris'mus 'ceptin' what I cuarn't rebeal,
For fokes may tell all what dey do but cuarn't tell what dey feel.
We ain't gwine hab no mo' sich like, dat Chris'mus kin not be,
Case white fokes' sot to wurkin', an' de niggers is sot free.
Good-bye, Miss Kate, Marse Charley, you had bes' keep out'n de Sun.
Rebeccy is dat hoe-cake an' dat bacon almos' done?

WHEN MARSE RAN' GOT KILT.

"I CUARED HIM HOME, MARSE CHARLEY."

WHEN MARSE RAN' GOT KILT.

Jes' set down dar, Marse Charley, on dat ole time har cloth char,
Hit's mighty saf' an' easy, 'twas a present from yo' Mar.
Bles' heaben for her goodness, caze she was mos' kine to me—
Her face was like a angel, an' her eyes was like de sea,
So blue an' deep. You could not fine de bottom ob dem eyes,
Dey look like some 'eflection ob de Savior from de skies.
Her words was like dat manna dat de anshunt Isrulites
Foun' on de mornin' pastur, what de angels spread o' nights.

O, she was good to all ob us, white fokes an' niggers too,
An' nar a sole libbed on dis place dat didn't lub Miss Sue.
" Ole Miss" we called her in dem days. We lubbed to say " Ole Miss,"
Hit was a sign ob 'fection, jes' de same thing as a kiss.
I members well dat lone, sad day when she took sick an' died,
I went down in de lowgroun' pines an' cried, an' cried, an' cried.
De sweetes' life had lef' dis lan', de sweetes' voice was still;
De ole plantation changed dat day, an' neber, neber will
Be like hit ust er be. Set down Marse Charley on de char.
I hope you is a righteous chile ob yo' sweet, righteous Mar.
You want me to tell you ob de time when young Marse Ran' got kilt?

'Twas awful hard to bar Sar, but 'twas what de good Lord wilt.
Hit 'tis a sadsome story, but I'll tell you ef I can—
My memory is gwine fas', but I cuarn't forgit Marse Ran',
Nor how he libbed, an' lubbed, an' laffed, an' rid, an' fit, an' died;
Now how I prayed so long dat day, an' when I quit I cried.
Hit 'twas a tur'ble battle, but we fit hit as we mout,
I b'lieb hit was de hardes' fight dat in de war we fout.
But ef I'm gwine to tell you den I spec' I'de bes' begin
Wid when we yeard about de war fo' he an' I went in.
In ole Amelia, we was here, when news dar comes to us
About de war arisin', an' I think 'twas May de fus'
In eighteen hundud sixty one an' Nannie Domino.
Dat was de year de lowgroun's had de dreadful oberflo'.

De corn crap hit 'twas ruint, an' de Appomattox riz
Untwell hit cotched de cow pen an' drowndid our bes' cow, Liz.
De taters warn't no good dat year, an' wheat was mighty bad—
Hit seemed we had de wustes' luck dat we had eber had.
I don't kno' much 'bout who got mad, or what dey got mad for,
But bofe sides got to sassin', an' dat sassin' fotched de wor.
I'se yeard sence den dat 'ligion is mos' gin'rally de cause
Ob all dis rumpass an' a killin' what we call de wors,
But in dis case 'twas diffrunt an' de niggers made de muss
Dat brung a tribulation an' a fightin' on to us.
De Yankees sade dey's suf'frin', an' we'll sot de niggers free.
De Cornfed sade, you shet up, an' jes' let our niggers be.

De niggers warn't complainin' an' dey lubbed de cabin life,
In dat ole time ob comfort for de man an' chile an wife.
De vict'als was abundant, an' our close was spic an' span,
An' den we libbed jes' like we would in dis bles' Suddern Lan'.
Wid watermillions ripe an' sweet down on de ice-house flo',
An' possums in de simmon trees, what else did we want mo'?
De niggers warn't complainin', an' dey neber sade a word
About a bein' unhappy Sar, as eber I is yeard.
De gempman was de marster, but de gempman was our frien',
An' we didn't want dat frien'ship to bust up Sar, an' to en'.
But startin' to Virginny, whar we sade dey should not come
To gib us any trouble in our ole Virginny home,

We got to fight de battles ob de Souf Cornfidrit wars,
An' dat's 'bout all I knows Sar, in de matter ob hits cause.
But you ought'r seen our fokes den when dey foun' de news was true
Dat 'vasion was a comin' Sar. De air was black an' blue.
I neber yeard sich langwidge from ole marster fo' dat day;
He cuarried on in what seemed like a mos' unchristian way.
I b'lieb 'cept for dat 'ligion dat hilt holt on mos' on us
He would a broke completely an' los' hesef' an' cuss.
Ezactly like de men de ladies too got mad you kno',
An' sade so much a quar'lin' dat you almos' thought dey swo'.
De chilluns eben dey got mad an' made deir leetle fuss—
You scace could fine a single sole dat wasn't fit to cuss.

De gempmen jined de comp'nies, an' mos' eb'ry single man
In ole Amelia county an' her sister Powhatan
Was jinin' an' a gwine, I clar, untwell when dey was done,
Ob all de men in dese here parts dey hardly lef' a one
To take care ob de place, or ten' a crap, or blow a horn.
Dey was mo' scacer den a measly nubbin' in our corn.
Yo' Pa he jined de Richmon' Blues, an' den my young Marse Ran',
He jined de hoss-back troop dey raised across in Powhatan.
Deir captin was Marse Charley Ole—a good one to be sho',
An' deir leftenant was, you kno', Mis' Hobson' young son Joe.
De sargent was Marse Harty, Mister Willyum Hair'-son's son.
An' Marse Joe Gibbs, our mess's cook, he was anodder one.

Den dar was young Marse Lewis Harvie, an' Marse Jimmie Werf—
As fine a lot ob cabilmen as rid upon dis erf.
In dis here worl' no braver men no wars ain't neber see,
An' all de men ob dat ole troop was brave as dey could be!
Dey lubbed to git to fightin' as mos' fokes do lub to eat,
An' dey didn't hab no notion 'bout a time for a retreat.
When dat ole troop got started dey was gwine somewhar dat day,
An' 'twarn't no use for Yankees to git crosswise in de way,
For dey was gwine I tell you, gwine a bubblin, to dat spot
Like gravy in a skillit dat ole Nat had made red hot.
Dar warn't no way to hender dat ole resky Pow'tan troop;
You ought'r seen 'em chargin', an' you ought'r yeard 'em whoop.

'Twas like a great big pac' ob houn's a openin' wid deir cry
Behin' a fox a runnin', but who knowed he had to die.
Marse Ran' he rid de sorrel colt, an' I, I rid ole Nade,
An' way we went one day to whar de war would be dey sade.
But fus' we marched to Richmon' town, an' dat was only fun,
Becaze, you kno', de time for fightin' hadn't as yit begun.
But hit was comin' slo'ly, an' dat sojer play didn't las'
For mo'n a week or month befo' de mis'ry come to pas'.
In Richmon' hit was nelegent. De vict'als was de bes',
An' not a thing had we to do but jes' to eat an' res',
Dey mounted guard a mornin', an' had eb'nin' dress perade,
All dressed up in deir finery an' lots ob golden braid.

De ladies come mos' all de time to see de sojer boys,
An' life in camp was jes' a great big passel full ob joys.
So dey was geth'rin an' geth'rin' untwell dar come a day
When buglers blowed de bugles an' we had to march away.
De ban's dey sot to playin', an' de drums begun to beat,
De cannons rumbled loudly 'long on wide, rock-paved Broad street,
De banners was a flyin', an' de sojers look so glad,
Dat we begun to feel dat war was what we wished we had.
De sight we made was splendid, an' de hosses mos' kep' step,
An' ladies waved deir kerchiefs, an' smiled, an' laffed, an' wep'.
An' some was gwine to glory, Sar, an' some was gwine to die,
An' soon dem praisin', smilin' ladies dar was gwine to cry.

Our gin'ral was de gin'ral dat mos' eb'rybody love.
He was so han'some dat he mout a drapped down
from above,
A angel gone to sojerin' upon dis sorry worl',
But dat he lubbed to be a singin', chirpy as a girl.
He'd sing away a mornin', an' he'd sing de same at
night,
Nare shadder crossed his countenance, dat face was
always bright.
You'se yeard ob him Marse Charley, Gin'ral Stuart
was de man,
De fines' cal'vry gin'ral dat we had in all de lan'.
I hear him now a singin' 'bout de ole hoss dat was
gray,
A comin' out a wildernes' an' warn't gwine long to
stay.
I almos' see dem golden spurs he wore upon his
boots,
An' graceful wabin' ob his han' tow'ds ole Sweeney
Toots,
His drab, saft hat an' feadder cotched up wid a star
ob gole—

Ole Marster when He made dat gin'ral sho'ly broke
de mole.
But I cuarn't tell you all about dem fo' long years ob
fight,
'Twould take too long, Marse Charley, an' hit 'tain't
fur now fo' night.
He kep' us stiddy fightin', an' he rarly let us res',
Untwell we all got ragged an' our food warn't none
de bes'.
Our bacon got so rancid an' de brade dat full ob
worms
Hit sets my hade a shiverin' an' gibs me yit de
squirms
In my tuff stomick when I thinks ob what dem days
we eat.
Dat hard tac' would a crawled right off ef eber hit got
wet.
How in dis worl' dey made so hard dat measly ole
hard tac'
I kin not compehen'. Hit would not saften, bust,
nor crac'.

Yas Sar, hit was as hard, I clar, as dat dar iron plow—
To sabe my life, Marse Charley, I b'lieb I couldn't eat hit now.
We got dat low an' on'ry dat we retched de lowes' pitch,
When eb'ry gempman ob us all had gone an' got de itch.
An' do' we washed all dat we could, an' tried to keep us clean
Dem varmin would come on us dat's de meanes' ob de mean.
I ought'n to tell you ob dese things dey is so mighty low,
But dey was in de war Sar, an' I'se boun' to talk jes' so.
But nary word ob grumblin' did he hear dem brave boys say,
Dey fit an' bled, dey bur'd deir dade, an' rid wid him away
To fight agin. Dem men was made ob ole time Suddern stuff,

Which neber knowed an' neber tole 'bout when dey had enuff.

But arter while Marse Ran' he riz to be a captin an'

Dey took him out ob his own troop dat come from Powhatan,

An' him an' me dey sont to sarve on Gin'ral Pickett's staff,

An' do' I was so proud I laffed hit 'twarn't no time to laff.

Dat 'motion kilt my marster, for ef in de troop he'd staid,

He wouldn't a got in dat big fight an' on de fiel' lay dade.

He went to Gin'ral Pickett for de wuss fight ob de war;

'Twas mighty sad, 'twas tur'bul, Sar. What did he go dar for?

But dar he went, an' dar he fit, an' dar a brave man died,

An' dar a nigger's heart got broke, an' dar ole Isaac cried,

Dey drawed dem up one mornin', 'twas de third day
ob July,
In line ob battle dat was formed ob men dat had to
die.
I clum a fence an' watched dem form beneaf de slopin'
hill,
Whar in de brilin' Sun dey stood for seb'rul hours
untwill
I got so narvous dat I ses, dar's sumpthin' sho'ly
wrong,
Dey stays down dar too quietly an' too onnat'rul
long.
Yes Sar, I got so jerky dat 'twas like I had a chill,
A watchin' dem brave sojers at de bottom ob de hill.
Den jes' 'bout when 'twas dinner time, de Sun sade
hit was one
O'clock, a settin' on de fence I yeard a single gun.
An' den good Lord-a-marcy! dar come bustin' out
de noise
Ob seb'rul hund'ud cannons dar a shootin' at dem
boys.

Hit soun' like jedgment day had come an' eb'ry one ob us
Was summoned up to jedgment in dat big, tremenjous fuss.
Hit skeered me into sich a trimble dat I los' my sense,
An' jumped so high up from de rail I fell off ob de fence.
De yearth hit shook an' shivered, an' de smoke bethicked de ar'
A siffocatin' 'twell I thunk we all would die right thar.
For I couldn't b'lieb 'twas people dat was makin' sich a stir
Ob ilemints an' turmile, but de Lord had made hit 'cur.
Den suddently de guns dey heshed an' eb'rything was still,
An' muskits 'gin to rattle at de bottom ob de hill.
I knowed dat sumpthin' awful was a gwine to happen den.

But pray I couldn't to sabe my life, I jes' could say "Amen."
I was so skeered my sense war gone, my tongue couldn't make no soun',
Jes' mumblin' an' a trimblin' dar I laid upon de groun'.
But in dat word, young Marster, dar was all a man could pray,
A skeered sole say'n in breffless prar all dat hit had to say.
An' den I yeard de order, " Forw'd," an' all along de line
I seed de motion ob de men, an' knowed whar dey was gwine.
Right up dat hill dey pinted to whar all dem guns was sot,
Wid forty thousan' Yankees waitin' for dem in dat spot.
Dey moved as stiddy an' as true as ef 'twas dress perade,
Deir shoulders techin' shoulders, an' de gin'rul at deir hade.

But praise don't 'mount to nuffin' an' no mo' I cuars to say,
'Cept dat straight line ob battle was deposed ob " men in grey."
Dat's all you hab to say Sar, for de res' is known to all.
Dey moved like corn a wabin' an' deir line was like a wall.
An' so dey went haf' up de hill, when forw'd I seed 'em sarge,
An' kno'ed de gin'ral had gib order for de men to charge.
Dar bruk loose on de hillside den de loudes' " rebel yell,"
An' I mos' hear de gin'ral say, " Now boys jes' gib 'em hell "—
De saints forgib me for dat word, I had done sho' forgit
Dat I was now a Christian man, an' not a rebel yit.
Away dey went right up de hill into dat place ob deff,
An' I got so ixcited dat I actshul hilt my breff.

A cheerin' an' a yellin' an' a rushin' tow'd de top,
Dat ole Division hurried in a way no fokes could stop.
An' den de Yankee cannons turned a loose deir iron storm,
An' mowed dem down in ranks an' files, but quick agin dey'd form.
Dey needn't a tried to stop 'em for dey was de "men ob grey,"
Who'de ruther fight den eat, I b'lieb, on any sort er day.
Dey flung deir nale kaigs an' canbusters murd'rin' down de slope
Untwell for not a single man I had de slightes' hope.
De ar was full ob bustin' shells, de grape was whistlin' loud,
An' mos' a million bullits was a hitin' in dat crowd.
Hit was like hell had been turned loose—Dar is dat word agin,
But I don't mean no harm an' so hit cuarn't be much er sin.

An' 'twas like hell all turned a loose in answer to a cuss,
I clar to heab'n, Marse Charley, nuffin' else could hab been wuss.
Dey cheered an' fell, dey fell an' cheered, an' o' de dade dey run,
An' paid nare bit ob 'tention to dem shot or hill or gun.
I seed de off'cers fallin', but Marse Ran' I seed kep' on,
'Twill 'twixt de smokes I looked agin' an' Lordy, he was gone.
My heart sunk in my stomick, an' my breff come quick an' fas',
Den in a minnit mo' I yelled an' jumped up off de grass.
I'de plum forgit de bullits an' de canbusters an' shell,
De noise an' fight, de skeer an' me, an' eb'rything as well,
But up de hill I runned to whar I thunk I seed him fall,

An' neber cuared a single bit for anything at all.
A bullit hit me in de arm, but not one word I sade,
For I was gwine to git Marse Ran' onles' dey shot me dade.
An' thar he was lyin' still right flat upon his face,
His blood a red'nin' eb'rything about dat sacred place.
I turned him gintly ober, but so soon's I cotched his eye
I knowed his time was sartin come an' he was boun' to die.
"O Lord," I hollored, "O Marse Ran', please look at me onct mo'!"
An' his dear eyes looked in my eyes—— He whispered, but so low
Dat I, to sabe me, couldn't make out what he was try'n' to speak,
An' neber think he'd talk agin he 'peared so mighty weak.
But den I seed him try agin, an' dis time plain I yeard,

Do' low he spoke, in whisper low, an' slo'ly word by word.

" Isaac—-Good-bye—-Isaac—tell—-Mar—I feel—— Isaac—-Good-bye,

Tell—Isaac all—at home—-dat I was—-not afeered— to die;

Tell—tell dem I—-died for dem, an'—an' for—my country's good!"

I tole him, an' I scace could speak, dat I mos' sho'ly would.

An' den he sade, " for honor, tell—-tell—, Isaac, hole my hade."

An' den de blood bulged out his bres', an' den Marse Ran' was dade.

" Somebody's darlin' " lay dat day upon de grey hill-side,

" Somebody's darlin' " fit dat day, an fit untwell he died,

" Somebody's darlin' " lef' dat day a pain for all ob us,

An' many a heart was hurt dat day, an' one sweet heart did bus'.

Please 'scuse my cryin' Marster, I cuarn't hep' de
wish to cry,
I rickolix so well dat day I watched my darlin' die.
I picked him up an' toted him a down dat bloody
hill,
An' in my arms he lay so white an' beautiful an' still.
His smile was like a angel's, an' I knowed his fight
was won—
A sojer's sole done furloughed 'caze his sojer work
was done.
I cuarred him home, Marse Charley, an' right yonder
now he sleeps,
Beneaf de grass an' vi'lets whar dat weepin' willer
weeps.
To me his grave is holy, an' I'se kep' hit all dese
years
Sweet wid de grass an' flowers, an' mos' watered hit
wid tears.
But ob de fight I seed no mo', dey tell me dat de
boys
To Cimitiry Ridge went up through all dat deff an'
noise.

I neber boddered 'bout my arm, aldo' hit hurt, untwell
I got him safely home agin, an' den hit soon got well.
Hit's techy now for rheumatiz, an' brings me back de day
In sad remimbrance when Marse Ran' in battle passed away.
I'se been here eber sence, Sar, eber sence dat time he died,
An' 'twell I jine Marse Randuff thar, 'tis here I want to bide.
An' when my time is come, as 'twill, an' I've took sick an' died,
Marse Charley put me 'neaf de tree by my young Marster's side.
You mus' be gwine? Good eb'nin' Sar, I hopes you'll come agin,
Hit does me good to tell you 'bout de times our fokes libbed in.
Please 'scuse my tears. Good-bye, Good-bye! Gord's doin's is all right.
Nummine Rebeccy, thanky, I ain't hongry none to-night!

DE SUNDAYS AN' DE 'LIGION DAT IS GONE.

"BUT JES' SET DOWN AND TALK."

DE SUNDAYS AN' DE 'LIGION DAT IS GONE.

Good Mornin' Sar, Good Mornin' M'am! I'm raly glad you come,
An' tell me 'bout all ob yo' fokes, how is dey all at home?
Marse Charley, how is you to-day, I hope you'se well Miss Kate.
I'm mighty glad to see you caze hit's lonesome here ob late.
Rebeccy went a week ago down to Marse Jeemses place,
An' ob a pa'r ob frien'ly eyes I kinder wants a tas'e.
She's gwine come home to-morrer, an' I reck'n 'twill be sometime
Befo' she gits plum rested from dat backward uphill clime.

She's mos' too ole an' ailin' to be trampin' to de Oaks,
An' dat big hill 'twixt here an' dar is hefty for ole fokes.
Somehow or nother we cuarn't larn what mus' be plain to you,
Dat we ole fokes cuarn't pos'bul do what onct we ust er do.
Wid grey har'd age de knee jints gits too stiff so far to walk;
An' I ain't fit'n for nuffin now but to set down an' talk.
Onct 'pon a time I ust er plow 'long any sort er man,
An' better den young Isaac den yo' Par didn't hab nare han'.
In dat ole wheatfiel' yonder I is made de cradle sing,
An' in dem ole corn shuckin' days I neber do a thing
But jes' walk way wid all de fokes. I cuarn't hep' now but laff
When I remimber how de res' couldn't do much mo' den ha'f

I did, no matter how dey wurked. I spec' hit made me proud.

But you cuarn't hep' dat pride M'am, when you constant leads de crowd.

Hit 'tis dat ilemint ob sin dat in us fines a place,

An' lets us look a smilin' at de lef' ones in de race,

A kinder nat'rul selfishnes' dat in us all is sot,

An' don't care 'bout no odders, 'cept to git what dey is got.

But now I cuarn't wurk hard M'am, an' de res' ob time down here

I'm satisfied to plow behin' dat ole red, broke horn steer.

We bofe goes slo' an' poky, but we makes a leetle crap,

Enuff for one po' 'oman an' for one ole worn out chap.

She's gwine come home to-morrer Sar, an' jes'as sho' as sin

Hits gwine to be a good long time befo' she goes agin.

She'll be so tired an' groanin' when she sets down in dat char
Hit's gwine take heap er suasion for to start her back down thar.
I knows her well, young Mistis, an' she ain't so nimble now
As when she cleaned up in de house while I was hin' de plow.
She ain't gwine back torectly, an' de Spring will hab set in
Befo' she gits de notion, an' ole Isaac's lef' agin.
Tobacker, Sar! I'm much obleedged, hit's what I wished I had.
Mine's done got mighty funky, an' hit's tas'e is almos' bad.
How cum dey puts dese leetle brass things all along de plugs?
To tell you ef 'twas made ob long leaf or 'twas made ob lugs?
De bran' you say? An' dat's de name? An' dis is "Grabely Pres'?"

In dem good days dat now is gone O'noco was de bes'.
I'm gwine pull off dis bran right now, case only tother day
When young Marse Jimmie Bannister come ridin' 'long dis way,
He gimme one nice bit ob piece like dis fixed up wid brass,
An' bit'n a chor I bruk a touf, de nex' one to my las'.
Hit was a shame to los' dat touf, Yes M'am, an' now I choose
To teck no resks, for sho's you born, I'se got no mo' to lose.
You wants me tell you sumpthin' mo' about de life dat's gone,
I knows hit all Marse Charley from long fo' you bofe was born.
You lubs to hear me tell about de good days dat is pas'?
Dey was good too Miss Katie, an' too good for dem to las'.

An' ef you lubs to hear my tales, I lubs to tell dem too,
An' nar a sole in all de worl' I'd ruther tell den you.
I'se tole you 'bout our Chris'mus time an' when dey kilt Marse Ran',
Arter he lef' dat horseback troop he jined in Powhatan.
What does you want me talk 'bout now? I members eb'rything
From way de ole houn's ust er bark to how de mock bird sing.
Deres nuffin ob dat ole time life ain't cotched hard in dis brain,
An' when I fotch it back I gits a pledjur outen pain.
For howsomeber when I thinks about dem good ole days
My feelin's gits a crosswise an' dey tech me in two ways.
'Tis sad to kno' dat dey is gone an' cuarn't come back no mo',
But den agin hit makes me glad to call dem back so sho'.

An' when I talks about dem Sar, I libs in dem agin,
Jes' like I'd been an' gone away, come home, an' walked right in.
'Tis but a sweet word song, M'am, sot unto a sadsome tune,
A kinder late October day sont back somewhar in June.
I b'lieb I'll tell you 'bout de 'ligion dat we had dem days,
When we was doin' eb'rything in dem ole fashion ways,
An' how we went to our ole Chu'ch whar onct we singed an' prayed,
An' 'tracted meetin' at de Chu'ch when all day long we stade.
We was Episcumpalyons, 'mong mos' high tone fokes was we,
An' had de fines' sarvice dar as eber dar could be.
Dar was some odder kind er 'ligions scattered roun' about,
But dey didn't warship much like us, an' mos'ly lub to shout.

We neber 'lowed no shoutin', an' de fokes jes' say
"Amen"
Wheneber in de prars dar come what seemed a leetle
en'.
Sometimes we jawed back standin' what de good ole
Prar Book sade,
A speakin' to de preacher like de body to de hade.
We neber had no jumblin' caze we all had larnt to
tell
What our ole preacher wanted M'am, an' up we riz
an' fell.
A norgan hysted up de tune an' how de time was
wrote,
So eb'rybody in de choir could strike de samest
note.
An' sich a singin' we did hab, I clar, hit was enerf
To make you b'lieb de angels had come down from
heab'n to erf
A singin' ob de music dey was ust to in de skies,
An' 'twas dat sweet hit made you cry onles' you shet
yo' eyes.

De balunce ob de Chu'ches was as Christian fokes, 'tis true,
But dey didn't like to warship much like we all ust er do.
Dey neber had no Book ob Prar an didn't stan' to sing,
An' seemed to hab a notion for a change in eb'rything.
But den dey was good people an' dey prayed bofe loud an' long,
Do' dey didn't hab no norgan for to hyst deir 'ligious song.
You ought to yeard us singin', O, dem himes was good to hear,
When dat sweet norgan tried to fotch de bery heabens near.
" When I kin read my title clar to mansions in de skies,
I'll bid farwell to eb'ry fear an' wipe my weepin' eyes,"
Dat was one hime in our Chu'ch our lubly choir would sing,

Untwell hit soun' jes' like deir tune was music on de wing
A risin' an' a risin' up unto de good Lord's throne,
An' healin' eb'ry sinner an' a heshin' eb'ry groan.
Mos' gin'rally 'twas Baptis' here arfter you lef' us out,
An' dey all was de people dat I sade did lub to shout.
Dey warn't so much peculiar, Sar, cept'n when dey took fokes in,
An' den dey used mo' water for de washin' out ob sin.
We'd drap a drap er water for de sin dat was mos' rank,
But dey picked up de seekin' man an' soused him in a tank.
One day down in de ribber dar close by de injine's pump
De preacher hit one nigger's hade aginst a hidden stump,
Which bruk up one baptisin', for de people got afrade,
An' de ole preacher didn't dar no futher out to wade.

But nare a bit ob feelin' come betwixt dem fokes an' us,
Two Sundays in de month dey had, an' we de third an' fus'.
Deir Chu'ch was named de " Brick Chu'ch," an' down yonder hit stan's still,
But our'n was sot de odder way, an' hit was called " Grub Hill."
Dey had a heap er preachers, but we neber had but one,
An' a mo' holier man den he didn't walk beneaf God's Sun.
An' so I disremimber now mos' all de Baptis' names,
Dey was a stayin' so onriglar; do dey strongly claims
Dat changes was de bestis' for de congregation's good,
While we all tried to keep our preacher all de time we could.
His body warn't so much to see, you'd say 'twas tol'bul thin,
But his big soul was pow'ful in hit's battles for our sin.

An' in dat hade ob his'n, Sar, deir was a bilin brain
As full ob 'ligious notions as a cloud's got draps ob rain.
You's yeard yo' Ma speak of him, M'am, you mus' hab, I declar,
For she lubbed him as all us did, de people near an' far.
His name was Mister Burkley an' as nateral was he
In Grub Hill's ole time pulpit as a ship upon de sea.
His sole was full ob goodness an' his life ob sacrifice;
But he don't preach no mo' here now, he's gone to Paradise.
One Sunday 'twas de ole Brick Chu'ch, an' one hit 'twas Grub Hill,
As riglar as a sojer goes upon his riglar drill.
De Grub Hill Chu'ch was full ten mile, de Brick hit warn't but seb'n,
But who cuarn't go dat fur to Chu'ch ain't gwine much fur tow'd heab'n.
We neber mine dem miles we went caze we all lubbed to go,
An' Sunday was de hapyest day ob all we had I kno'.

To do no wurk dat holy day our fambly neber 'lows,
'Cept but to feed de hosses an' de hogs, an' milk de cows.
De Lord is tole us dat good law right in de Holy Book,
An' de cuarn't 'low no liberties wid dat law to be took.
For what de Lord writ wid His finger on de slab ob stone
Is 'portant an' you's got to mine, let what hit stops alone.
But dat cuarn't be no 'sturbance for a raly Christian sole,
He's boun' to do what Gord's Word ses, no matter what he's tole.
Caze lubbin' Gord he lubs His Word, an' lubs to do His tas',
As ef hit 'twas a pledjur he was glad had come to pas'.
Soon arter brekfas' when de holy Sunday mornin' come
All ob de fokes was fixed for Chu'ch an' ready to leab home.

Ole Peyton driv de carridge hitched to de pa'r ob greys
Whose names was Fan an' Savage, an' a pa'r wid frisky ways—
Dey'd pull dat carridge down to Chu'ch an' back agin for sho',
An' nar a tech ob Peyton's whip was used to make dem go.
In dar would go ole Miss, Miss Sue, Marse Bill, an' yo' An't Ann
An' by hit's side on his own hoss would ride my young Marse Ran'.
Behin' de carridge on a leetle squar made wooden seat,
Ef 'twas a all day meetin', we would cuar our snac' to eat.
'Twas put in a big basket what had hilt sometime shampain,
An' ob dem vic'tls Unc' Julius fixed nare one was gwine complain.
Ole speckly Bill, his ridin' hoss, yo' Pa would always ride,

An' den Miss Lucy on dat Charley'd gallop by his side.

I driv de fo' hoss wagon filled up full wid girls an' boys,

Who neber had no odder day not haf' so full ob joys.

Dem girls an' boys I speaks ob, Sar, warn't chilluns but was grown,

An' eb'ry one in dar, Sar, had a sweetheart he mout own.

Dey all warn't ob de fambly, some was comp'ny what we had.

We always had some comp'ny, 'twas dat comp'ny made us glad.

Dar's scace a night 'cept gues's slep' in de red room or de blue,

An' ef you'd opened de green room do' a gues'd a looked at you.

We picked de nices' straw an' spread hit on de wagon flo',

An' put on hit de boys an' girls 'twell dar warn't room for mo'.

Dey'd make me drive across de ruts an' ober eb'ry
stump,
Untwell dat wagon hardly run but jes' kep' on de
jump.
Hit 'twarn't no trouble to go long wid dat dar fo'
hoss team
Dey went across de country like a race hoss in a
dream.
For to dat wagon I would hitch fo' ob our fastes'
mules,
An' ef you'd seen us gwine our way you'd think we all
was fools.
So soon's we got up to de Chu'ch we would de teams
onhitch,
An' dar would be so many dar on almos' eb'ry switch
Dat hung down from a tree you'd see somebody's
hoss or mule
A stan'in' tied beneaf de oaks or poplars whar 'twas
cool.
An' den de fokes would scatter for to hab a leetle chat,
De oler fokes gwine disaway an' young ones dey
gwine dat.

Dey'd set down on a root or stump or stan' up in de shade,
An' talk about de politix or what good craps dey'd made.
Dem's ole fokes talkin' dat away de young ones mo' like dubs
Warn't thinkin' 'bout no craps or law but only 'bout dey lubs.
I spec' dar was a heap er courtin' done at ole Grub Hill,
Dar's plenty insperation dar for him who has de will.
Beneaf de trees a singin' in dat Summer shiny spot
I reckon dey who wanted lub mus' some ob lub hab got.
Whar Natur was a courtin' an' de heab'ns an' erf was met
Hit couldn't a been so hard indeed, some gemp'man for to get
His sweetheart to de highes' pitch, an' tell his story so
Dat hit was nigh onpos'bul for de lady to say no.

But dar dey bofe, de ole an' young, would chat an' talk untwell
Unc' George de sexton would come out an' ring de las' Chu'ch bell.
Dey'd move in sloly den, de ladies settin' on one side,
De men upon de tother, an' not eb'n de groom an' bride
Was 'lowed to set togedder. Caze dat warn't de Chu'ch's law—
No brudder set wid sister an' yo Pa mus' leab yo' Ma.
'Twas siperation in de Chu'ch what in de Chu'ch was jined,
A kinder pullin' off de tree what roun' de tree was twined.
I cuarn't ixplain dat rule we had, hit always puzzled me,
An' I'se been tole dat down in town dat rule you neber see.
But here dey mus' set sip'rate, an' de people did not rile,

Because, I 'spose, dey'd practised hit den for so long
a while.
De choir would sing, an' Mister Berkly'd read de
Word an' pray,
An' by an' by he'd preach de sarmon in his blessed
way.
De people riz an' fell an' set an' kneeled to pray an'
sing—
Our Chu'ch, you kno', I tole you, had a rule for eb'ry-
thing—
An' lissened to de sarmon, dat was usu'l tol'bul long,
An' come too wid a sigh or stretch to jine in de las'
song.
Do' we didn't call dem songs. Dat warn't de Chu'ch's
name. 'Twas himes
We raised an' sung in Grub Hill Chu'ch dem blessed
anshunt times.
But arter while dey would git through, somewhar
about two hours,
An' gether on de grass to eat among de wile wood
flowers.

You 'members 'bout de Chris'mus dinners I tole you we had
Dem days when war hadn't teched us, an' when all dis lan' was glad.
Well, what we eat at all day meet'n, hit's truf an' hit's de fac'
Was jes' as good as dat, Sar, 'cept we called hit den a snac'.
Upon de grass de ladies spread a table clof as white
As moonshine on de water, M'am, upon a summer night.
An' on hit dey fixed all de things we brung wid us to eat,
De meats an' pickles, brade an' cakes, de pies an' odder sweet
Things good to tas'e, My Sole! 'twas good, Marse Charley, sho's you born,
An' plenty too ob all dem things, do' 'twarn't long fo' 'twas gone.
You gits mo' hongry in de woods den you does in de house,

An' may be dat's how cum de tale about de po' Chu'ch mouse.

Dey gits so hongry 'bout de Chu'ch whar dar ain't nuff'n' to eat

Dey gits mo' po' den odder mice who libs on corn an' wheat.

We'd hab a ham an' mutton an' some chickens baked an fried,

Some sassage an' cole shoul'er, an' dem pickles dat was tied

Up so dey couldn't to pieces drap, dey was dat rich an' saf'—

I clar you'd git so hongry you was skeered you wouldn't git haf'

Enuff to eat, dem vict'als was so 'ticin' to yo' eyes.

Den dar'd be cakes an' jelly, sarbes, an' all de kine ob pies.

Deir warn't no fokes had better, Chile, I tells bofe ob you dat,

Caze all we brung along wid us was cooked by Unkle Nat.

An' he didn't hab no 'sperior cook no whar about dese parts,
Dey couldn't tech him in meats or brade, or puddin', pies, or tarts.
Ole Nat was jes' a nat'rul cook. De good Lord put him dar,
An' smellin' ob his cookin' made you hongry, M'am, I clar.
All dese good things we had an' raly mo' den I kin tell,
Caze I cuarn't 'member all de things. I 'members none too well
In dese here days when age is come an' cotched my inside brain,
An' rheumatics my body wid a constant tech ob pain.
But when you got through eatin' ob dat snac 'twas sartin sho'
Yo' stomick was full to de top, an' you didn't want no mo'.
Den dar was milk an' tea, an' wine, an' plenty too ob ice,

An' sumpthin' in de baskit too dat tasted mighty nice
An' warm upon yo' stomick, ef you sarched right good for hit.
De hunters calls hit medecine to take in case you'se bit
By one de sprade hade moc'sins dat mout be slidin' roun'
An' unbeknownst to you a settin dar upon de groun'.
But dat was in de cornder of de basket, kinder hid—
Ole Marster put dat in dar an' de ladies knowed he did.
So ef you wanted some ob dat you'd hab to mine yo' eye,
An' sorter take a off time chance an' slip hit on de sly.
Dey's mighty 'tic'lar in dem days, 'bout how de young men do,
An' dar was always danger ob somebody ketchin' you.
But by an' by dey'd quit de snac' an' in de Chu'ch retarn
To do mo' prayin' an' mo' singin' an' a bit mo' larn

From out a shorter eb'nin' sarmon dat de preacher gib,
'Bout how to die an' rise to Gord, an' how we ought er lib
Dat we mout die in dat dar way ob which he tried to speak,
An' how we ought er git mo' strength caze we was awful weak.
An' den de benediction he would 'voke de Lord for us,
An' dat was all day meetin' from de las' unto de fus'.
We'd hitch up den de teams an start back on de way we come,
A joltin' an' a joltin' 'twell by good dark we was home.
De ole fokes an de young fokes den would chat a while an' set
Upon de poach or neaf de trees digestin' what dey eat
An' yeard. Dar's heaper wurk for bofe de brain an' stomick, M'am.

When you's jes' yeard two sarmons, an' been eatin' much ob ham
An' a whole passle sweets an' things like all day meetin' snac'—
Ef you could eber try hit, M'am, you'd kno' hit was a fac'.
Den when de moon was gwine down, an' ole Marster prars had sade,
Dey'd say de "Good Night" on de poach, an' all would go to bade.
I wisht you could er libbed dem days, Marse Charley, and Miss Kate,
But you was born for dat good time a jes' a few years late.
I b'lieb you would a liked de things ob our ole fashion way—
Good Gracious, yonder's Becky, she is done come home to-day!

UNCLE ISAAC'S EXPERIENCE WITH NEW THINGS.

UNCLE ISAAC'S EXPERIENCE WITH NEW THINGS.

De times is changed, Marse Charley, an' de worl' ain't
gwine las' long,
De people's got to projectin' an' doin' things dat's
wrong.
Dey's lef' deir nat'rul bus'nes' an' is try'n' to take
a han'
In doin' de Almighty's wurk an' managin' His plan.
He ain't gwine stan' hit long, I kno', dis bigity dey's
got,
An' de fus' thing dat dem fokes kno' He's gwine wipe
out de lot.
Dey thinks dey's mighty peart, Smart Elecks what
dey is,
A foolin' wid dem awful things de good Lord knows
is His.

Dey's cotched de lightnin' out de skies, an' drawed
hit like a wire
Across de erf—'tis dangous to be triflin' wid dat
fire.
I'se always yeard dat ef you took a tree de lightnin'
struck
For wood an' burnt hit in yo' house, you's sho' gwine
hab bad luck;
An' chances is dat sometime soon yo' house is gwine
git hit,
Caze lightnin' draws de lightnin', an' 'twon't do to
fool wid it.
Don't laff, Marse Charley, what I ses, I tells you hit
is true,
I'se been an' seen hit, Sar, mysef', an' knows what I
tells you.
But dat ain't all dey 'spires to do an' aims at now-
a-days
In all dis foolishnes' dat's come wid deir new fangled
ways.
Dey's gwine kill heap er fokes sometimes, dat's what
I prophesy.

An' I'm gwine keep away from town, caze I don't
want to die
In no sich fractious way, but when de good Lord
tells me go,
I wants to go as nat'rul, Sar, as when I come, you
kno'.
Dey's got de hommybusses runnin' all about de
town,
An' gwine up hill as fas', Miss Kate, as dey is gwine
down,
An' nare a bit ob hoss or mule hitched to hit's ary
een—
'Tain't nat'rul, an' no sich tom fool thing I ain't neber
seen.
But dar dey comes an' dar dey goes wid jes' a leetle
wheel
Hung on a pole aginst a wire on which de lightnin'
steal
Along dey ses. You cuarn't see nuffin 'cept de
runnin' cuar,
An' when one stopped I ses, ses I, "Hit ain't gwine
move from thar."

But bless yo' sole, Marse Charley, den de man jes' move a screw,
An' long she went so mortal fas' you mout a sade she flew.
Git on one Sar? Naw Sar, ole Isaac neber eben tried.
I tells you now, on one dem things I neber am gwine ride.
Why, 'tis de fac', Marse Charley, do' I ain't off'n much afeered,
When I seed dat thing runnin' loose I got so tur'bul skeered
I almos' runned mysef'. Hit look like mir'cul times had come,
An' when sich is de sho' 'nuff case I wants to be at home.
But dat ain't all dey's doin' dar in dat new Richmon' town—
'Tain't ole no mo', Marse Charley, an' de place is sho' gwine down—
Dey's changed de good ole ways yo' kinfokes had an' dat so fas'

Dat sumpthin's boun' to happen dar, dat wickednes' cuarn't las'.
Hit made me sad, Marse Charley, an' I tarmined dat I would
Jes' hurry up my bus'ness dar de fastes' dat I could,
An' git back home to Becky whar 'twas peaceful ef 'twas slo',
To stay an' lib our quiet life 'twell yonder I mus' go.
An' so I called to mine de things I'd got to git an' fix,
An' 'mongst de lis' ob things dere was a vile ob Number Six.
I went to git dat Number Six in Mister Miller's sto'—
He come from up 'bout Nottoway, I b'lieb, Marse Poke, you kno'!
But when I seed him in de sto' I b'liebed his mine was gone,
I neber seed no gempleman in sich a cuarrin' on.
He had a black knob nigh his ear an' in a leetle hole

He poked his mouf an' talked, but Sar, to save my mortal sole
I hardly dars to try to tell what hit 'twas dat he sade.
Hit soundid, an' I lissened, as ef he'd done los' his hade.
But sump'n like dis seemed what I yeard, " Nex' fo' wid eighteen please."
" Hillo! Poke Miller. Yes. Is dat you George? About dem trees?
Yes! You don't hear? Dey cut us off. Nummine. You say you'll sell?
Haf' doz'n ob Castor Ile. All right. I'll sen' hit up. Yes. Well!
To-morrer? Naw, Good joke," he sade. An' den he laffed. " Too high,"
He sade agin. " I'll stop by on my way down town. Good-bye."
An' den he retched an' pulled a leetle peg, an' ses he, " Off ";
An' b'liebin' dat I ought'n 'sprise him, I gin a leetle cough.

He looked up den as kindly, wid a smile upon his face,
An' look ob welcome, sayin', " Ike I'm glad you's in my place."
How cum he call me " Ike " you reck'n, I neber like dat " Ike,"
An' hit's de one thing 'bout Marse Poke dat I ain't neber like.
I ain't no " Ike," he ought to kno', but " Isaac " is my name,
An' sich a nickname 'pears to me, I clar, a sin an' shame.
An' den he shook me by de han', an' tole we howdydo
Jes' nat'rul as he eber did. Marse Charley I tells you,
De man he skeered me, an' so bad I didn't kno' zactly whar
I was. I jes' could ax, Marse Poke, for Gord's sake, what's dat dar
A hangin' on de wall. Was dat you talkin, all alone?
He sort er shook hesef' an' grinned, an' sade, " Ike dat's a plone."

But dat word gib me no idee ob what he's drivin' at,
For I ain't neber yeard ob no sich thing as plone.
" What's dat
Marse Poke," I axed. " Hit 'tis a mighty useful thing," sade he,
A tryin' to look serus like an' a convincin' me.
" A great kinvenience to all bus'nes' fokes. Hit lets you talk
To people who libs far a way, too far for you to walk
To fine dem, an' wid dis in'sment you simply has to cotch
Yo' wire on deirs, den ring a bell, an' dat will sartin fotch
Dem to de plone." But I cuarn't understan' no how dat thing,
For how is I a bell dat's forty miles away gwine ring?
Hit stan's to gumption dat you cuarn't. Dar's sumpthin' dar dat's wrong,
Dat distance is onreas'n'bul, an' entierly too long.
He sade dar was a nixtion made—dat's when de wires is jined—
An' axed me ef I'd like to talk. I pos'tively reclined.

"Hit 'tain't gwine hurt you Ike," he sade, "I'll let you talk to Giles,
Giles Brown dat libs at Wilk'son Shop, I reck'n dat's forty miles."
"I wants you larn about dese plones, an' see how good dey wurks."
An' so I went up to de thing, but narvous like de jurks
Dat gits a po' blin' stag'grin' hoss, an' trimblin' an' afeered,
Case I don't want tech nuffin,' Sar, ob which I'se neber yeard.
An' den Marse Poke sade, "Seb'n on fo'," an' den a bell hit ring.
"Now put dis to yo' ear," he sade. I didn't want tech de thing;
But I jes' hitched my britches up, an' stuck hit to my ear,
An' sho, enuff dar come a voice I could not hep' but hear.
"Hillo," hit sade, "Who's dat?" "*Who's* dat?" "Hit's me," I shakin' sade,

An' eb'ry minnit I ixpict to see mysef' drap dade.
" Who's you? " hit axed, " Well, Well! " " I is ole Isaac," den I 'plied.
" What does you want? " I yeard agin—I trimbled 'twell I cried.
" I don't want nuffin', Sar, please Gord," I sade, " 'cept to go home,
An' ef I gits back dar onct mo' from hit I'll neber come
Away agin." An' den dar come a bur-r-r, a buz'n-n, an' buz'n-n
Right in my ear like bumble bees an' hornets by de doz'n,
An' fo' de lord I drapped dat thing an' neber sade Good-bye,
But out'n dat sto' I runned as fas' as any bird could fly.
I knowed hit 'twas a disprit case, an' I was in a fix,
An' so I stopped for nuffin', clean forgot my Number Six.
I'se sorry too, Rebeccy's ailin' much wid cramps ob late;

Please sen' her some ob Number Six when you goes back, Miss Kate.

I'd had enuff ob numbers, Sar, an' I didn't want no mo'—

Dar's debils in dem numb'rin' plones, bad debils, M'am, I kno'.

Deir want no chance for nobody to talk in dat dar plone,

Marse Poke was standin' off a piece, an' I was dar alone.

Needn't tell me 'bout no lightnin' caze de lightnin' hit cuarn't talk,

An' you cuarn't hear nobody, M'am, when hit's too far to walk.

Naw Sar, how I gwine tell how cum hit 'twas? Hit 'twan't no Giles,

Caze Giles was up at Wilk'son Shop, well nigh dat forty miles.

I don't kno' nuffin' 'bout hit, an' I'll tech hit, Sar, no mo',

Dat's one thing you kin sot right down for sartin an' for sho'.

So soon's I got my senses good I started for to fine
Marse Jeems, an' axed a gemp'man, who looked ginerous an' kine,
Ef he could tell me wharabouts I mout look for Marse Jeems,
An' would you b'lieb hit dar I was across de street hit seems
From whar his office was in dat big Chamber ob Commerce.
An' ob all houses to git in or out hit 'tis de worse
I eber seed. I walked into de open big front do',
An' dar a black man sade Marse Jeems was on de sebenth flo'.
He was a standin' in a do'way ob a leetle room,
A holdin' in his han', I b'lieb, a dustin' feader broom.
I axed him please to sho' me which a way I'd fine de stars,
Instade he sade, "Step right in here." I saw in dar some chars,
An' b'liebed he'd axed me to set down untwell he foun' de time

To sho' me whar to fine de steps up which I had to clime;
An' so I went into his room an' 'umbly took a seat,
Not payin' no attintion, but jes' lookin' in de street,
When Lord-a-marcy, fo' I knowed I saw de flo had riz—
My back bone sot to shiv'rin', an' my marrow bones dey friz.
I thunk de jedgment day had sho'ly come, an' we was boun'
To Kingdom come, an' yit I thunk, "Thank God we ain't gwine down!"
My heart was in my thote, Sar, an' my voice was choked right still,
I couldn't pray, I jes' could feel, hit is de good Lord's will.
But as I passed anodder flo', I yeard somebody say,
"Hit's gwine to sno'." Hit busted on me den, in no sich way
Is fokes gwine talk ob "Jedgment Come." Dat struck my mine as proof—

Some biler mus' a busted an' hit's blowin' us through de roof.

I tried to yell an' holler, but I couldn't to save my life,

But jes' my meanness come to mine an' membrance ob my wife.

I couldn't make, Sar, nar bit ob soun', my mine hit 'fused to ac'.

I knowed I was a gwine, mos' gone, an' dat was plain a fac'.

I warnt gwine see my wife no mo', my time was come to die,

An' in my sole I tried to say, " Rebeccy, wife Good-bye."

So par'lyzed was my eb'ry thought hit I could scacely think.

But when I felt de roof had come I yeard a leetle clink,

An' at dat minnit, Sar, dat nigger open flung de do',

An' turnin' roun' to whar I sot, he sade, " De sebenth flo'."

At fus' I thunk I'd git a stick an' broke his measly hade,
For he'd done skeered me den an' dar 'twell I was mo'n haf' dade.
Marse Charley, den I'd got so mad I raly had no sense,
An' I'd a sho'ly kilt dat man ef eber I'd commence
To beat him as I wanted to—De Lord forgib de sin,
I'll try not let my passion git de bes' ob me agin.
Thank God de Christian 'ligion got hit's holt an' fotched me 'bout!
I larned my skeer was ig'nunce, an' so, Sar, I jes' got out.
But dat black nigger mout a knowed I was a stranger man,
An' comin' from de country dat I didn't much understan'
About de nelevators what but newly dey is built,
An' saved me from de skeer I got dat nearly had me kilt.
But fokes don't think 'bout odder fokes as onct dey ust er do,

An' kinenes' now ain't runnin' loose, I clar, 'twixt me an' you.
I tole Marse Jeems about my skeer, Marse Jeems is a good man.
He kinely sade 'Twas all becaze I didn't quite understan'
What 'twas dat brung me up. A nelevator's what dey call
De thing, he 'splained to me, an' hit climes up aginst a wall
Dar want no danger in hit. Hit jes' cuarred you to yo' flo'
Widdout yo' walkin' up dem stars a thousan' steps or mo'.
Den when I had done axed him for to please to buy my meat,
An' tole him I was hurrin' home an' mus' go down de street,
He took me up de passage an' to whar de steps went down,
An' I ain't neber been so glad as when I retched de groun'.

'Tain't right, Marse Charley, I cuarn't b'lieb hit, Sar,
hit cuarn't be right,
De Lord cuarn't be approvin' what ain't nat'rul to de
sight.
An' neber sence de worl' was made from Bersheber
to Dan
We fokes ain't knowed de flo's to rise no whar in dis
Gord's lan'.
De people dey ain't 'umble, dey's ezalted 'twell dey's
proud,
An' I'm gwine keep mysef' from out dat stiff an'
naked crowd.
Amelia's good enuff for me, I'll stay here 'twell I
die,
Here is contintment now, Miss Kate, de good lan'
by an' by.
I ain't gwine back to town no mo', but here I'm
gwine to stay,
Whar me an' my Rebeccy can lib in de ole time way,
As onct hit 'twas in my young days when joy was in
de lan',

An' fokes had 'nuff to do, Sar, widdout meddlin' wid Gord's plan.
De butter's come Rebeccy now, an' dar's a done ash-cake,
Come gib dese chilluns one mo' snac' for good ole timeses sake.
Dat buttermilk an' cake is good, I yeard, M'am, what you sade.
Rebeccy git de 'lasses too, I wants some on my brade.

MARSE RAN'S HOSS.

MARSE RAN'S HOSS.

I'se neber tole you 'bout dat hoss, an' how dat day
he died?
Why, when I got up to Marse Ran', dar he laid by his
side.
I mus' a been so strained in talkin' den about Marse
Ran',
I oberlooked de dyin' hoss in griebin' for de man.
Naw, Sar, de hoss warn't sabed, but on dat battlefiel'
ob woe
He bled 'long wid his marster, an' wid him he tried
to go.
'Tis mighty nigh as sad, Sar, now to think 'bout dat
dar hoss
As 'tis ob my young marster. Dey is been my life-
long cross
In memory to bar along de tired part ob my life—

Dey all is gone, dem ole time frien's, 'cept Becky dar, my wife.
I wisht I could a sabed dat hoss, an' brung him home agin,
I b'lieb hit would a hoped me in de new life dat set in
Wid dat sad day ob Gettysburg, an' which cuarn't hab no een
Untwell ole Isaac's lookt his las' upon de gole an' green
Ob ole Amelia's fiel's, an' yeard de angel's sullem call
To come up dar an' jine 'um whar you cuarn't go way at all.
We three was always gwine toguther, den for us to part
Was mos' too much for Isaac, an' hit like to broke his heart.
Dey went away in glory, an' dey lef' me here in pains,
Wid grief a pullin' on my sole like Sabage on de reins,

Hit had to bus' up sumpthin' for sich mis'ry could not las',
An' so hit busted up my life, an' lef' me wid de pas'.
But ef I could a brung him home, an' kep' him here to stay,
An' fed, an' curr'd, an' rubbed, an' breshed him off twict eb'ry day,
Dat mout a made me sorter feel some nigher to Marse Ran'—
De seein' ob de hoss a fetchin' 'membrance ob de man.
But always stay'n toguther dey was jined too, Sar, in deff;
'Cept'n I caurn't tell how 'twas at all dat Isaac den was lef'.
Bofe on us, Sar, belonged to him, an' nar one could he spar,
But I was lef' to stay down here, Bruce went wid him up dar.
His mammy was a Black Hawk mar, a Red Eye colt his sire,

An' nar a hoss in dese here parts could rank 'mongst hosses higher.
His bres' was broad an' easy, an' his ankles clean an neat,
Like dem de high born ladies show a walkin' on de street.
His weathers clim a leetle high, jes' high 'nuff for de slope
Dat makes a graceful back line when you sont him in a lope.
His rump was roun' an' plump, Sar, wid de barres' ob a slide,
To make you kno' dat hoss was gwine howcum his marster ride.
His nose was small enuff, I b'lieb, to drink out ob a glass,
An' not too much ob daylight fotched 'twixt him, Sar, an' de grass.
His tail hung wabin', glis'nin', Sar, jes' like a girl's gole ha'r,
His leetle years an' hade a archin' yonder in der ar.

His mussels stood out fa'r to 'veal what kinder
strength he had,
Wid nar a pint about him dat a hossman thought
was bad.
His stride was sumpthin' monstrous, an' o' a ten foot
gate
He flung hesef' as easy as you'd jump dat stick Miss
Kate.
A king's name, Sar, dey gib him, but for short dey
called him "Bruce";
An' when, M'am, he got started hit 'twas like de win'
turned loose.
Jes' let Marse Ran' stan' neaf dat tree a hour by
crack ob day,
His horn a blowin', windin', driftin' up de stable
way,
Dat hoss was set a jumpin', crazy, so M'am, dat you
mout
A thunk you yeard him holl'rin', "Isaac come an' let
me out."
An' ef you neber answer quick he'd git so awful
mad,

You'd think he'se gwine bus' eb'rything, an' wish,
Sar, dat you had.
Den when Marse Ran' was on him, an' a openin' was
de houn's,
De red fox gwine a scurrin' 'cross de misty, grey low-
groun's,
Den doublin' in Ocmulgee, an' now gwine towards
de mill,
A runnin' on de pastur fence, den humpin' up de
hill,
A way off yonder sneakin', an' den racin' on his
track,
A brazen ole smart Elleck, now a comin' right
straight back,
You'd sho' see sumpthin' in de ar a scummin' nigh
de erf,
An' dat was Bruce a flyin' like de didn't want tech de
turf.
'Twas like a streak ob sorrel jes' a splittin' through
de ar,
Marse Ran' a settin' in de sad'l like you sets in a
char.

He an' de hoss an' sad'l, Sar, was beglued into one piece—

A man an' hoss got jined into a new kine ob a beas'.

I see hit all agin so plain. Look yonder, yonder look!

Jes' by dat pint ob ches'nuts whar de road is made a crook.

My Gord, M'am, ain't dat music, what dem houn's is soundin' now?

Dey's runnin' by de sight, an' dey'll soon cotch ole Red I 'low.

Hark, hark, to him ole Fashion, you is gwine now Music, hark!

Ole Miss is in de middle, an' dat's Black Dick's ole time bark.

Ah, here dey comes, de riders, but who'se dat dar in de lead?

Marse Ran' an' Bruce, an' nar one else, I knowed dat 'fo I seed.

My Gord how dat hoss races, wid his hade an' tail out straight,

Now hystin' into flyin', Sar, right o' dat ten foot gate.
Dey looks not like dey's erfly things, a rale hoss an' a man,
But angel-man on angel-hoss a sailin' cross de lan'.
An' so he'se now, young Mistis', for a sperit he was made
To rise from off dat battlefiel' on which I saw him dade.
An' how cum dat his hoss ain't dar? He died dat same day too,
A frien' dat was de fastes', an' as faithful, Sar, an' true
As on dis erf, no whar you go, you fine ar human frien'.
An' is dar enny reason for dat lub to bus' an' en'?
Some how or nuther I cuarn't hep' but b'lieb dat hoss to be
A angel-hoss up yonder wid his marster, M'am, you see!
I hopes hit 'tain't onchristian, caze I wants to hab hit so,

An' ef 'tain't wrong 'fo Gord, I'm gwine to keep de thought, you kno'!
I clar, Marse Charley, when I gits to 'member an' to tell
Ob dem ole days, an' deir ole ways, I clar, Miss Kate, M'am, well,
Indeed hit 'pears like 'tain't no thought, but fac' is what I see,
An' dat ole life is back agin, an' in hit dar is me.
I tries to tell 'bout what dar was, an' 'stead I tells what is—
De pas' ain't pas' no mo' at all, but present's what hit 'tis.
An' den dey'd come back fom de chase, de reins a hangin' loose.
Marse Ran' a smilin', singin', an' dat proud highflyer Bruce
A sort er dancin', an' a showin' dat he knowed de tail
His marster had was got by him a flyin' like a gale
Across de fiel's an' gullies, on de hard groun', in de san'—

I b'lieb like me dat hoss was proud ob my young Marster Ran'.

An' when we got in to de war, we knowed den what he was—

I clar to Heab'n, M'am, dat he done all dat we fokeses does.

Marse Sweeney'd blow de gallop, gallop, blow de walk, he'd walk;

He done mos' eb'rything dat we could do 'cept'n 'twas to talk.

Nar nicker'd nick 'twell Rebellee, he didn't want sleep 'twell Taps,

He knowed de bugler's soun's as well's a farmer knows his craps.

You blow de call to water, Sar, an' dat hoss sho' would drink,

But thirsty nar anodder time as eber I could think.

When Boots an' Saddles was de note dat brave ole Sweeney soun'

'Twas almos' much as I could do to keep Bruce on de groun'.

But when he blowed de Charge, my Gord, dat hoss
was sho' a sight!
His eyes all wile, his body trimblin', an' de curb rein
tight
As iron, an' ef den Marse Ran' hadn't a let him free
rein go,
He'd sartin bus' in splinters, an' 'twarn't no use tell
him "Whoa."
He was a nat'rul sojer-hoss as my young Marster
Ran'
Was nat'rul born an' bred to be de braves' sojer-man.
Dat las' sad day ob Bruce lifetime I rubbed him down
so bright
His sorrel color lookt to me like gole dus' in de light.
His mane like spun silk sailin', an' his pride a sight
to see,
A sayin' to all on us dar, "jes' lookt Marse Ran' an'
me."
I hilt his hade untwell Marse Ran his sad'l he'd good
got on,
An' den befo' I'de time to think dey bofe on 'um was
gone.

I hollered to Marse Ran' " Good-bye "; I'll grieb now
'twell I die,
I neber kiss ole Bruce dat day, an' tole him too
" Good-bye."
Dey went like joy a flashin' M'am, when long hit
cuarn't abide,
An' den I seed dem stoppin' short close by de
gin'rul's side.
One time he darted like a narrow to dat awful fence,
To speak to Gin'rul Garnett dar, jes' when de wuss
commence.
I spec' dat was de las' word dat brave Gin'rul Garnett
sade,
A ans'rin' ob Marse Ran', for in a sec'n dey shot
him dade.
Den back through all dat smoke an' deff Bruce brung
Marse Ran' away
So swif' you scace could see his laigs, but jes' de man
in grey.
But Bruce was done his work an' life. I'se tole you
Marse Ran' died

A piece beyant dat tur'ble spot. Dar Bruce laid at his side.

Dade, dade, he too, his velvit eyes stretched upward tow'd de sky,

I knowed he didn't want lib no mo' when his young Marster die.

Dat was his glor'ous een, my blessed Marster's hoss! Poor Bruce,

I hopes you had a sole brave hoss for Gord to turn a loose!

Good-bye, my chillums. Don't cry M'am, my los' was sho' deir gain.

Rebeccy, bett'r take in dem close, hit looks like hit's gwine rain.

UNCLE ISAAC HAS MORE EXPERIENCE.

UNCLE ISAAC HAS MORE EXPERIENCE.

Marse Charley don't you recken dat de jedgment's comin' 'long,
De people's got so vile like, an' is doin' so much wrong?
De worl' seems upside down, Sar, an' de country is upsot
As bad in crazy notions as dem dat de town is got.
I'se been dat skeered dis week, Sar, dat I hardly dars to go
Fur from de house or Becky; I don't want to lef' de do'.
Dese times is fulled up to de brim wid foolishness an' sin,
An' fokes is got so curous now wid all dere projectin'.

Good manners don't concarn 'em, nor de vartues ob
de sole;
Dey's sacrificed mos' ob dat, Sar, for dollars dat is
gole.
'Twas honor once wid all de fokes who libbed in dis
here lan',
But money's lub is got de mos', an' dat, Sar, ruins a
man.
De Chu'ches, eben dey ain't right, an' Sar, I dars to
say,
Dey'd better git to singin' an' mo' often too to pray.
Dey tried Unk' Jonah tother day for dancin' week fo'
las',
An' would you b'lieb hit, when dat trial raly come to
pas',
Dey neber done a thing to him, do all ob us had
thunk
Dey'd tarn him out; an' all becase he sade dat he was
drunk.
De dancin' was a nawful sin, but not de drunk, an'
dat's
A strainin' at de camels an' a chokin' on de gnats.

De Chu'ch is gwine to bust up ef dat is de way dey does,
For in Gord's Chu'ch dem idees, Sar, 'tis sartin neber was,
An' neber will be ef de Lord is gwine to hab His wish,
An' 'fore dey knows dem fokes will burn like Moses in de bush.
How cum de fokes ain't got no sense, an' what's got in deir hade?
I sho' misstan's heap dat dey does, an' mos' all dat is sade.
Marse Charley what does "divers" mean? I don't conceib dat word,
An' fur as I now 'members, I ain't hit befo' is yeard.
Mo' den one kine, an' diffrunt kine ob sickness or ob fokes?
I knowed dat nigger was a fool, his sarmons jes' some jokes.
Dey ain't no mo' a sarmon den a bucket is a well,
An' ha'f de time dat nigger don't kno' what he'se try'n' to tell.

De nigger ain't a nat'rul preacher do he nat'rul sings—
His songs is music sho' 'nuff, Sar, but mixed up is de things
He tries to gospul on de fokes, an' ef dey had good sense
Dey'd stop dese black fool preachers fo', Sar, dey commence.
A nigger makes a sexton, but when he tries to preach,
Hit's hystin' for de simmons dat is hung too high to reach.
I axed you 'bout dem "divers," caze de odder Sunday night,
Down yonder at de colored Chu'ch dat nigger Gabrul White
A preachin' ob de sarmon, sade he took up for de tex',
"De Lord a healin' divers ob deseases," an' den nex',
He sade he "'vided up de sarmon into sev'rul parts,

An' hoped de congregation would receib hit in deir
hearts."
" Dey sho' had heap er kine ob sicknes'," he
reck'n'd, " ober thar
'Bout whar de Lord was preachin' dis, a heap an'
mo' to spar.
But den," he sade, " he spec' dat was mos' likely what
we had,
Caze sicknes' in dis country had done gone an' got
as bad
As hit could git," he reckened, " an' dat ole Jeru-
salum
Hadn't got no sort er 'vantage when de time ob sick-
nes' come.
An' den," he sade, " de Small Pox is a mighty bad
desease,
But hit you kin git cured ob, ef de bumps you'll only
grease
Wid coon grease, an' de doctor understan' de Small
Pox way,
When hit's upon a pusson sot an' sho'ed 'twas gwine
to stay.

An' Chol'ry, you kin cure dat," he monstrated up an' down,
" Ef you gits you quick a doctor, who ain't not fur off de groun'.
An' eben in de Fever dat is yaller, dar's a chance,
Ef you gits you a nuss as good as ole Miss Mollie's Nance.
But ef you gits de 'divers,'" den dat black fool nigger sade,
" Hit 'tain't no use ob talkin' for hit's 'Good-bye John,' you'se dade."
I knowed dat he was sassin' dar widdout a bit ob sense,
An' nar a idee in his hade befo' he had commence.
Dey's gwine bust up de Chu'ch, Sar, ef dey keeps along dis road,
An' 'ligion's gwine start backward from de way hit's pintin' tow'd.
I tole you I was skeered dis week, an' so I was indeed.
I yeard an' seed what here befo' I neber yeard or seed.
I was a fotchin' home a turkle Chewsday eb'nin' late,

An' jes' befo' I retched de tarn dar by de stable gate,
I passed one dese here men fokes what dey calls a benquilquis',
Who'se larnt to pucker up his mouf in some sort ob a twis',
An' fling his voice mos' any whar, an' in mos' anything,
A settin' hit to talkin' or a makin' hit to sing.
I warn't a studyin' nuffin', but jes' slo'ly gwine my way,
When fo' de Lord in Heab'n, I yeard dat turkle say,
"Now when is you gwine drap me, when is you gwine drap me down?"
"For Gord's sake now," I sade, an' den I drapped him on de groun',
An' runned a trimblin' to my house as fas' as I could run,
A prayin', an' a won'drin' what dat turkle could er done
To git a voice ob human kine, an' talk to me like dat,
About a drappin' ob him down, an' Sar' I drapped him flat.

But by an' by I yeard somebody knockin' on my do',
An' dar a man stood at hit, who sade, " Howdy Uncle Joe."
" I ain't name Joe," I 'plied to him, " but Isaac is my name.
I'm well I thanky Marster, an' I hope you is de same."
" Yo' turkle's up de road," he sade, " an' hadn't you better walk
Up dar an' git him unkle, for dat turkle didn't talk.
'Twas me who done de talkin'. Now go git him for yo' wife."
But Sar, I wouldn't a teched dat turkle not to sabe my life.
I don't kno' nuffin' 'bout de benquilquis', but dis I kno',
A turkle what kin talk to me I'm gwine to sho' let go.
Dis trabblin' roun de country wid a nar a bit ob aim,
But skeerin' ignunt pussons, Sar, hit 'tis a sin an' shame.
I reck'n I'se out de times, Sar, an' I cuarn't quite understan'

About de fangled things dat's come here lately in de lan';
An' when I sees one ob dese 'ventions what dey's gone an' built,
I gits a crawlin' in my back like I was gwine git kilt—
A sorter chill an' creepin' dat I hardly kin ixplain.
But Sar, hit 'tis de ekal ob mos' any sort er pain.
De odder day I went to fine dat yonder one eared hog,
An' gittin' kind er winded, Sar, I set down on dat log
Dat's layin' in de forks ob road dar nigh de gran'ry gate.
You knows de log I speaks ob for you'se set dar wid Miss Kate—
When fo' I knowed I yeard a soun' like win' betwixt a crack,
Whew, whew, hit sounded comin' up a swish behin' my back.
I looked up in a minnit, an' Marse Charley, Lordy, dar

I saw a sight dat skeered me so hit mos' unkinked my har.
A buggy had done busted loose, an' on two ob de wheels,
A man was settin' an' a gwine like yuars across de fiel's.
One was a great big high wheel, an' de odder hit 'twas small,
An' hitched behin' each odder, wid no way to go at all.
'Twarn't right for dem to stan' up, an' howcum dey went along
I cuarn't deceib to sabe my life. I mus' hab got all wrong.
You reck'n my hade is tangled an' my senses is all gone?
I'm feered I'll git so arter while I cuarn't weed out my corn.
Wid nar a thing a pullin', Sar, an' nar a thing to push
Dem wheels an' man went down de road in Sar, a parfec' rush.

I hollered when I saw de thing an' fell back on de log,
An' hurt my rheumaticky laig, an' neber cotch dat hog
'Twell Wensday, when down yonder in de guarden at de spring
I foun' him hard a rootin' an' a spilin' eb'rything.
What for you call dat thing I seed de man a try'n to ride?
Marse Charley was hit nat'rul? Is de ole time things all died?
A bisickem, you ses hit 'twas? I cuarn't quite understan'.
I'd like to sick de dogs on sich an' sick 'em out de lan'.
I mean dese all new things dey's fotched us in dese later days,
A chasin' out de country all ob our ole fashion ways.
You cuarn't stop any longer, an' is gwine to hunt to-day?
A drove ob patridges is usin' down de lowgroun' way.

Turn to de lef' Marse Charley, when mos' at de spring you come,
An' in dat fiel' I'm almos' sho' you'se sartin to fine some.
Good mornin', Sar, I'm busy too, I'm got to men' my cuart.
Rebeccy how dat chile is growed, an' Lordy, ain't he smart!

UNCLE ISAAC'S LAMENT.

"MARSE CHARLEY."

UNCLE ISAAC'S LAMENT.

I'm glad you liked de snac', M'am, in de days dat now is pas'
I'se gin yo' Par a heap like dat out dar upon dat grass.
He'd come down to dis cabin for Ant Becky's hot hoe-cake—
Nar one would suit him ha'f as good as dem Ant Becky make.
I feels not much like talkin', Sar, besides hit's gittin' late,
An' while for you hit mout'n be wrong 'twon't do for you Miss Kate
To be a walkin' in de woods arfter de night has fell,
An' now my mine is runnin' back I'm feared dat I cuarn't tell
You nuffin' dat is joyous, for I'm got my sadful tone,

Dat tech dat stops yo' singin' an' den cunjers up yo' moan.
De pas' is pas' foreber an' hit's happines' is gone:
No cradle's in de wheatfiel', an' no song comes out de corn,
No Marster's in de big house, an' no Mistis writes a pas',
No cump'ny's in de green room, an' no chilluns on de grass,
No ice is in de ice-house, an' no milk is in de churn,
An' nar a happy nigger now whicheber way you turn.
Nare hoss is in de stable, an' de kitchin neber smokes,
De people in de neighborhood is mos' all stranger fokes.
Deres jes' de pines an' lowgroun's dat de vis'tor now may see,
Besides my wife, Rebeccy, an' ole Isaac, which is me.
No horn blows out from 'neaf de trees, no houn's de foxes chase,
De dairy's fell to pieces, an' de farm is gone to was'e.
De cabins' gone to ruin, an' de orchard is mos' dade,

Ocmulgee stan's all lonesome, an' nuffin' here has stade,
'Cept our ole rickolictions, an' de promise for de bles',
When all dis life is ober an' dar come to us Gord's res'.
I ain't complainin' caze de good Lord's chilluns cuarn't complain—
Bofe jus' an' unjus' yit receibin' ob de latter rain—
But all my life in dis worl' dat was joyous an' was glad
Is in de pas' behin' me wid de hap'nes' dat I had.
I cuarn't be rickonciled at all to what our people does,
De Whiskey is like Turpentime, an' nuffin' what hit was.
De sugar's full ob san' now, an' de meal is groun' too fine,
De neighbors is mo' quar'lsome, an' few pussons is so kine
As onct dey was in my young days when joy was in de lan',

An' fokes had 'nuff to do, Sar, widdout meddlin' wid
God's plan.
I cuarn't be here much longer for I'm gittin' mighty
ole—
Lord make me ready to be gwine wheneber I is
tole!
An' let me please to stay right here an' lib in de ole
ways
Wid peace an, my Rebeccy for de balunce ob my
days!
We'se bofe done retched de topmos' pint ob life's
resendin' hill,
An' started down de valley whar de voice ob men is
still.
Our feet is creepin' nigh de banks ob deff's myster'-
ous stream,
An' life is come to look jes' like 'twarn't nuffin' but a
dream.
Yistiddy, Sar, hit seems to me dat me an' my Marse
Ran'
Rid out wid dat ole hoss-back troop dey raised in
Powhatan.

Yistiddy, M'am, my Becky's ha'r was black all o' her hade—
A sprightly gal whose supplenes' would den, I clar, er made
A willow withe a bendin' feel ob hit's own sef' ashame,
An' nar a hick'ry switch could hep' but feel hitsef' de same.
Yistiddy bofe ob us was young, an' all dis lan' was glad,
To-day we'se ole, an' nuffin's lef' ob all de lan' onct had.
Yistiddy hit was mornin' an' de Sun a shinin' bright,
To-day de eb'nin' shadders is a runnin' tow'd de night.
We sho' hab retched de eb'nin' time ob dis our mortal life,
An' soon we mus' be gwine away, ole Isaac an' his wife.
De angel wid his book is sarchin' an' he's soon gwine call,

An' me an' my Rebeccy will leab here for good an' all.
We'se gwine away my chilluns, Yas, fo' many Summers pas',
An' ob de ole plantation fokes I spose we is de las'.
An' now jes' fo we goes to sleep, dat sleep from which we'll wake,
My mine goes back from night time, M'am, to when hit 'twas daybreak.
A grave is yonder 'neaf dat tree, an' 'neaf hit rests de dade,
An' dars de cradle settin' dar wharin Marse Ran' onct laid.
An' dat's de distance stretchin' 'twixt de cradle an' de grave,
A distance dat no eyesight nar a big strain eber gave.
But night ain't black an' hor'bul, for in hit de bright stars shine,
An' ef you'se knowed de way befo' 'tain't nuffin' to be gwine
Along hits stillnes' happy on yo' tramp to whar you'd be;

For him who knows de pines an' fiel's 'tain't needful
for to see
De pafs dat runs through dem, no matter ef dey
twists an' tarns,
You'se only got to walk dat way which in de day you
larns.
An' so 'tis wid de eb'nin' time ob life, when hit is
nigh—
De "How-dy-do" ain't sweeter den dat good ole
word "Good-bye"—
For dem dat's taught a mornin' ob de way de Sabior
trord,
Is boun' to walk a eb'nin' time along wid Him to
Gord.
He led us in our mornin' an' He'll lead us in our
night,
An' Sar, we need not be afraid, we ain't gwine los'
His light.
Hit shined in all our gloom, M'am, when de clouds
come in de day,
Hit still will shine befo' us when pale deff pints out de
way.

We ain't got fur to go when, Sar, de angel's call is made,
An' den de sperret flies so fas' as soon's de body's dade.
Ole David's tole us in de Sams dat eben wid a span
We fokes may medjure all de way 'twixt Heab'n an' Powhatan.
I'm facin' ob de future but my mine is in de pas',
De mem'ry fixin' Isaac for de man he'll be at las'.
Caze what we'll be, Miss Kate, mus' be all dat we did or sade,
An' rickolictions bein' what is lef' when we is dade,
'Tis sperret mem'ry dat will be de sperret soul's one pledge,
When hit stan's face to face wid Gord an' He dat sole will jedge.
I cuarn't destrain mysef' from lookin' back a down de years,
An' hit 'tis dat dat makes me moan an' fotches up dese tears.
Good eb'nin' my young Marster, Gord bless you bofe Miss Kate.

You don't think now de Sun is sot dat hit 'tis not too late
For you to be a walkin' 'cross de nigh way by de crick?
Caze ef you does I'll go wid you. De ole man wid his stick
Is pretty peart in spite ob age, an' good for yit a while—
'Twould be a pledjure, Sarvant Sar, to go wid you my chile.
All right young Marster, den Good-bye, you'se like yo' Par a man,
An' in de time ob war dar was no braver in his lan'.
I'll be obleedged Miss Kate, M'am, ef de nex' time dat you come,
An' you kin git dat Number Six, you'll fetch Rebeccy some.
I'm comin' now Rebeccy, wife, Miss Kate gwine come agin.
Please come Miss Kate tomorrer an' bring her dat medecine!

THE PASSING OF REBECCA.

"REBECCY."

THE PASSING OF REBECCA.

Yo' sarvant, my young Mistis, how-dy-do to-day,
Miss Kate?
I seed you comin' 'cross de fiel', an' met you at de
gate
To let you in, an' tell you dat Rebeccy's mighty ill,
An's got so dreadful narvous dat we keeps de room as
still
As we kin do hit, M'am. Do' she ain't one dat much
complains—
She's got a heap er courage when hit comes to stand-
in' pains.
But come right in, young Mistis, she's spoke much
ob you to-day,
Do' hit 'tain't much we understan's ob what she
tries to say.

Come in Miss Kate, but saftly walk when you gits
on de flo';
She'll be rale glad to see you. Mine de step dar at
de do'!
You say fo' you goes in de house you wants to talk
to me?
For sartin, M'am, set in dat char, 'tis shady 'neaf de
tree.
Yes M'am, I got de Number Six you sont by leetle
Nade,
An' Nancy fotched the wine an' tea, de sugar an' de
brade
She sade you fixed up for we fokes, an' tole her for
to bring.
You'se good to us. I b'lieb, Miss Kate, you thinks
ob eb'rything
Dat we all needs. You is dat kine you mines me ob
yo' Mar,
Jes' like Marse Charley always mines me also ob yo'
Par.
No, M'am, de Number Six dis time don't seem to
retch de spot

Wharin her ailin' an' her mis'ry 'pears to now hab got.
Hit's wuss nor cramps de doctor ses. I b'lieb de 'sease he named
As sumpthin' in de bowels dat hab got too much enflamed.
Apendle-sea-tick was de way I cotched his namin' word,
But den I cuarn't be sartin dat dat's 'zactly what I yeard.
Dey's got new names for things dese days, an' mos'ly dey is long,
Heap longer den dey ust er be, an' may be I is wrong.
But axin' him de ailment, he reformed me dat he foun'
Apendle-sea-tick in her bad, leas' dat's de way hit soun',
An' I was doin' all I could to ketch what 'twas he sade,
But to sich hard an' big words I'm not ekal in my hade.

Yistiddy he was here agin, an' felt her all about,
An' sade he b'liebed 'twould be de bes' for him to cut hit out.
But den he 'peared to hisitate an' 'dopt anodder plan,
Becaze dat cuttin' at dat time she pos'bul mout not stan'.
He neber gibed her nuffin', but he made some liquid warm,
An' squirt hit through a syringe in de back part ob her arm.
Hit hope her much a hour or two, an' let her git some sleep,
But arter while de power ob dat physic failed to keep,
An' sence den she's been narvous an' so res'les' in de bade,
Dat eber sence way in las' night I'se by her badeside staid.
I was afeered she mout git up. You had to watch her close,
An' offen is I wished she had anodder syringe dose
Ob what ole Doctor Hambleton had squirted in her arm,

For nuffin' M'am, dat we could do made her de leas'
bit calm.
She mos'ly whispers to us now, she's got so mighty
weak,
So hit's mo' diffikilt to hear air word she tries to
speak.
But arly, M'am, dis mornin' fo' her hade was hurt
wid pain,
We understood mos' eb'ry word 'twas spoke so bery
plain.
She's been a dreamin' ob de pas', de pas' to us so
dear,
Dat's way back in de long ago an' yit's so mighty
near,
'Twas pitiful to hear her talk as ef de fokes was nigh,
Who long ago bofe ob us saw come one by one to
die.
She seed ole Miss an' talked to her jes' like she was
right thar,
A settin' in her chamber an' a rockin' in her char.
She tole her 'bout de sheets an' bades an' 'bout de
counterpane,

An' whar you chilluns had done gone down in de grove or lane.
She talked 'bout you partic'lar, when dar by her side she dreamed
Yo' Mammy was a standin', an' I clar Miss Kate, hit seemed
Almos' as ef de good ole time had come to us agin,
An' we was libbin' in dem days dat onct our fokes libbed in.
Hit 'twas so nat'rul who she seed, so nat'rul what she spoke,
Dat I could almos' b'lieb I had been 'sleep an' den had woke
To fine myse'f all young agin a plowin' in de corn,
An' my young Marster standin' thar a blowin' ob his horn.
She'd tell yo' Mammy 'bout yo' room, an' ax her 'bout yo' dress,
An' 'vise her 'bout yo' dis an' dat as she thunk was de bes'.
Sometimes hit 'twas yo' Mar she saw, who was de leetle girl,

Whose har her fingers was a twistin' up into a curl,
But den agin 'twas you she seed, an' den dar'd come a smile
Upon her face an' linger as she tole us 'bout her chile,
An' who dat chile she talked 'bout was bofe me an' Nancy knew;
For dar was sumpthin' in her manner when she spoke ob you
Dat tole a tale ob lub dat come from out a heart as true
As sunshine in de Summer fallin' out de skies so blue,
Tells ob de good Lord's goodnes' to His chilluns in dis worl'.
She lubbed you hard, young Mistis, an' you was her leetle girl!
Yo' Mammy was her sister, an' when she couldn't be about,
Hit 'twas Ant Becky in her place who ust er to take you out

To walk, or watch you while you played dar underneaf de trees—
An' nar a time for nuffin' did you hab to ax her please.
She'd gib you her own shadder, M'am, ef hit she could er cotched,
An' what you tole her for to git 'twarn't long befo' 'twas fotched.
She lubbed you like yo' Mammy, an' yo' Mammy neber mine,
But seemed to like hit caze to you "Sis Becky" was so kine.
An' yo' ole Mammy lubbed you from yo' hade down to yo' feet.
In ole Virginny nare a word has eber soun' as sweet
As "Mammy." Dat's de name dat always hurries up a smile,
An' fotches back de good ole times to let dem stay a while.
An' onct she b'liebed she saw Marse Ran', an' on her face come joy,

An', M'am, she 'peared to want to say, dat's Isaac's darlin' boy.

An' so he was young Mistis, an' so was Marse Ran' indeed.

In all my life nar sich a man ole Isaac neber seed.

Dem Yankees neber knowed at all dat hor'bul, bloody day,

What kine ob sole dey loosened for de Lord to take away.

But she may now be wantin' me. Come Mistis lets go in,

An' ef you wants to ax me mo' I'll come out here agin.

Come in Miss Kate an' see her, she'll be glad to see yo' face,

You'll fine a char dar nigh her bade nex' to de fier-place.

How is she doin' Nancy now? She 'pears to me mo' still.

You thinks she's done got weaker, an' you'se feered she's got mo' ill?

Miss Kate how does you think she is? Yas M'am,
she's awful weak,
An' gittin weaker eb'ry hour. 'Tis time de Lord to
seek.
An' yit I is been seekin' Him all eb'ry night an' day.
He'se yeard my prars, I kno', but den He'se gwine
hab His good way.
Hit's hard to rickoncile down here de answers to yo'
prar
When He'se done odder den you axed. We'll
rickoncile up thar.
She's passin' from de doctor's power, nobody but de
Lord
Kin step in now an' stop de breakin' ob her life's gole
cord.
Her eyes is shettin' like in sleep, but dat I kno' ain't
sleep.
Dat shettin' ob her eyes, Miss Kate, gwine open mine
to weep.
Please 'scuse me, my young Mistis, I didn't mean to
'low dat groan,

But hit hurts me so awful bad to hear Rebeccy moan.
Hit feels jes' like a splinter had been run into my sole,
An' lets my own life run right out untwell I gits dat cole
I shivers an' my heart has cotched a rheumatic ob woe
Dat makes me answer wid a groan at onct befo' I kno'
What I am doin'. Please don't cry Miss Kate, please M'am, don't cry!
Hit may be dat de good Lord yit ain't gwine to let her die.
Yas M'am, I kno' dat hope is gwine. She's dyin', yas, I see.
My Becky's fadin' out ob life, my wife is gwine lef' me,
Lef' me de ole man trimblin' an' so wa'ry in his age.
Good Lord, do tell de angel for to turn anodder page

In his big book whar Isaac's name is writ an' time is tole,
An' tell his sole come long right now a jinin' wid her sole!
For O my Lord, how will I stan' dis siperation here
From her who 'mong all peoples is to me de mostes' dear?
Please git de Prar Book Nancy, hit is ober dar somewhar,
An' please Miss Katie open hit an' read out'n hit a prar,
Dat ef de good Lord wills hit my Rebeccy may yit stay
Mo' longer here wid Isaac, an' please den Miss Katie pray,
Dat ef she mus' go yonder whar de troubled is at res',
He'll take her wid His angels in de mansions ob de bles'.
I thanky, M'am, she's easyer, but she's fadin', fadin' now,
Jes' like a vi'let wilts away beneaf de fros' I 'low.

Rebeccy does you kno' me? I'se jes' been out to de gate,
An' dis is our young Mistis, don't you kno' her? 'tis Miss Kate.
I b'lieb she yeard an' understood what hit was dat I sade,
Hit sartin 'peared to me as ef she tried to nod her hade.
An' now her eyes is openin', an' she knows us bofe, I b'lieb.
Thank you, my blessed Savior, for dis blessin' I receib!
Speak to her now Miss Katie, please speak to her now, don't cry,
'Twill cheer her up a leetle as de valley drawef nigh.
Or hit may be Gord's marcy will yit leab her here a while
To longer work an' pray. Look! look, Miss Kate, you see dat smile
Come slowly on her sacred face? Her lips is mur-m'rin' too,
An' I mos' kno' 'tis meant to be a welcomin' for you.

An' did you hear her den, Miss Kate, in dat one whispered word?

I'm sho' she sade "Good-bye," dat's hit, "Good-bye," dat's what I yeard.

Gord bles' you my sweet Mistis, for dat ole time Mammy kiss!

I kno' hit let her body tas'e onct mo' a erfly bliss.

An' now I'se kissed her too onct mo'. Kin hit be my las' time

Befo' she sees de golden stars an' up dem starts to clime?

She's lookin' at me now agin. Gord bles' dem sweet ole eyes,

Dey will be watchin' me so soon from out ob Gord's blue skies!

Dar, dar, I yeard hit sho' dis time, wid deff's cole han' so nigh!

Hit come so plain upon my ears, "Isaac, Isaac, Good-bye!"

Good-bye Rebeccy, far—farwell, Gord's got you in His arm,

You'se in de valley ob de shadder, but you won't meet harm,
Through all de darkness an' de danger Gord yo' sole will take,
An' in de takin' ob Gord's chile no mistake will Christ make.
Feel Nancy. Does you feel her heart give yit a single beat?
Done stopped! Good-bye my wife, Rebeccy always good an' sweet!
My eyes won't cry, Miss Kate, my heart jes' aches, my lips cuarn't groan,
My life's done gone, done gone, done gone, ole Isaac's lef' alone!
Alone in all de ole man's age, alone in all his pain!
But Gord will gib him strength an' peace so dat he cuarn't complain.
Alone 'mongst all de strangers, alone 'mongst dem dat's born
In dese new days dat he don't kno'! Rebeccy is you gone?

Gone from yo' husban' Isaac, gone up to yo' heab'nly
res'?
I don't kno' how he'll stan' hit, but Gord's done hit
for de bes'.
" Don't let yo' heart git troubled, an' don't let hit
git afraid,"
Dat's what de Scriptur tells you is de words de
Savior sade.
I feels yo' han', Miss Katie, M'am, you blessed angel
chile!
You wants to lead me to de char to set in hit a
while?
I cuarn't set down now Honey, please jes' let de ole
man stay
Right here by his Rebeccy dade, to look an' lub, an'
pray.
You'se cryin' hard yo'se'f my chile, you set down in
de char.
Ole Isaac's lef' here by hese'f, Rebeccy, she's gone
thar!
But when de angel trumpet's blowin' from whar
angels bide

Rebeccy'll come for Isaac, an' she'll be his angel guide.
She's in de good Lord's presense an' a jinin' in de song
De angels sing befo' Him, an' hit sho'ly cuarn't be long
Befo' ole Isaac's Sun gwine down behin' de trees an' set.
Rebeccy, I'm a comin', may de Lord my moans forget!
I almos' hear de angels' call, hit mus' be nigh my day,
An' you'll come down Rebeccy, for to sho' me up de way.
Why Nancy, is you let dat chile go 'lone dis time a night?
I could a walked along wid her. My Nancy, hit' 'twarn't right.
But nar a sole gwine tech dat chile, o' her de angels watch,
An' when she knocks on heaben's do' dar'll be a hysted latch.

Go tell de neighbors 'bout hit please. Dey'll come an' do deir part.

Rebeccy, Isaac's comin'! Yo' deff is broke his heart!

UNCLE ISAAC IN THE SONG.

UNCLE ISAAC IN THE SONG.

Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, dat is de ole time tune
We yeard in de ole happy days when all de months was June.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, dat is de song Miss Kate.
I spec' dat my Rebeccy mus' be lis'nin' at de gate.
She'll cotch dem words an' 'member, dey's de ones she lubbed so well.
'Twas in dem words all on us onct our hap'nes' ust er tell,
A voicin' ob our gladnes', an' a chantin' in sweet hope,
Wid dem sweet soun's ob music twisted up jes' like a rope,

An' stretchin' an' a stretchin' from de yearth up to de skies—
Our soles a shinin' an' a speakin' in our yearnin' eyes.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, I'm libbin' in de pas',
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, an' let dis pledjur las'.
Yo' Par is comin' out'n de house, yo' Mar is on de lawn,
Marse Ran' is whistlin' at de barn, nobody now is gone.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, de music's cotched my sole,
I feels my days come back agin, I'm done forgot I'm ole.
Unk' Julyus' in de dinin' room, an' Mary's at de churn,
An' Peyton's on de carridge box a drivin' roun' de turn.
I hear de cradles swishin', an' de san' upon de blade,
An' nar a sweeter music in dis lan' was eber made.

Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, Yas, dar's yo
unkle Bill,
An' yonder comes de cows a windin' up de cow-lot
hill,
Dar's Austin' too a drivin' dem, an' dar is Nancy
Ann,
Dey'll stan' for her to milk dem like for nare one else
dey'll stan'.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, dat song ob long
ago—
De bloom is on de clover, an' de Summer breezes
blow.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, I trimble I'm
so glad,
Dar's comin' back in music thought ob all dem things
we had.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, I hear unk' John
agin
A playin' on his banjo for de dance we'se gwine jine
in.
Dar's Poleyun an' ole Frances—lean de hoe aginst de
plow,

Dat's Isaac an' Rebeccy, dey's gwine sho' you sumpthin' now.

Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, full is de abenue
Ob gentle fokes a comin' to de weddin' ob Miss Sue.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, I hears agin de drum,
An' yonder is yo' Par a gwine, Marse Ran' an' me gwine come.

I hears de war a breakin', an' I sees de bloody dade,
A thousan' things is ramblin' wid de music in my hade.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, What makes you sing so low?
Hit's all a fadin, fadin, ob dem years ob long ago.
Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, you sings M'am mos' too low.

De trees is sot to sighin' an' de ribber runs mo' slo',
An' in de pines 'tis gittin' dark, dem faces fade away,
De music dream is passin', but hit brung me back a day

Dat was de sunshine ob my life, de joy ob all my fokes.

'Tis strange how out de long ago dese things de music coax.

Sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low, sing low, sing low, Miss Kate,

You hear de whippowill, de Sun's gwine down, 'tis late, 'tis late.

We mus' be gwine. Sing low, sing low, sing low, jes' one line mo'

In dat ole tune. Sing low, sing low, my Mistis, low, sing low—

A driftin' out er hearin' like de sunshine out er sight;

Low, low, so low. Hit's gone, my Mistis, gone. Ole time good night.

THE PASSING OF UNCLE ISAAC.

THE PASSING OF UNCLE ISAAC.

I kno'ed you'd come, Marse Charley, Good Ebenin'! How does I do?
I'm poly an' I cuarn't las' long, Marse Charley how is you?
Miss Kate cuarn't come. Yas Sar, I yearn dat she'd done gone away
To see her Ant, Miss Mary. Is she gwine make much er stay?
I spec' she won't see me no mo', de ole man's gwine dis time.
An' I ain't sorry, not at all, dat kin not be a crime.
You don't think so young Marster, you don't think dat dat is wrong,
When all my wurk is done down here an' yonder I belong?
Mos' all my gineration's gone beyant de lofty skies—

Hit 'tain't gwine make no diffrunce 'bout when one mo' ole man dies.
De worl' won't neber miss me, an' de people won't complain;
Dey'll shed no tears o' Isaac, an' his deff won't gib no pain.
I am so ole an' crippled up I ain't no count no mo'.
I'll be obleedged Marse Charley ef you'll kinely shet dat do'.
I'm gittin' ole, an' any draf gits pow'ful nigh de bone.
My rheumatics is techy, an' dey constant makes me groan
When through de do' de Winter air comes driftin' in so cole.
You cuarn't stan' what you ust er stan' arfter you gits so ole.
I'm glad I'm gwine, Marse Charley, for I'm lonesum now down here,
An' yonder whar de angels lib is many fokes so dear.
Ole Marster's gone dis many a day, an' Mistis' she's gone too,

Marse Peyton, an' Marse Ran', Miss Ann, Marse Willyum, an' Miss Sue;
Dey all in dat procession passed on through de heab'nly gate—
What for kin I a po' ole man want longer for to wait?
My wife is dar, Unc' Cæsar, an' Unc' Andrew, an' ole Nat,
Dey too has crossed de shinin' ribber whar de ange—, What's dat?

* * * * * * * * *

I yearn a gentle whisper like a banjo playin' near,
In leetle notes ob music, dat come saftly to my ear.
I b'lieb hit 'twas de angels. Would de good Lord do me so,
Sen' angels for to welcome me upon dat peaceful sho'?
I cuarn't be good enuff for sich a blessin', hit 'tain't me
Dem blessed singin' angels was a tryin' for to see.
'Tis gone agin. May be hit 'twarn't one ob dem pale deff's signs,

But jes' de wile win' driftin' through de wavy low-groun' pines.
De ole plantation now ain't like what onct hit ust er be,
Befo' dem Yankees fotched us war an' sot de niggers free.
De weeds is in de meadow, an' de pastur ain't no count,
An' nar a hoss, Marse Charley, dat is fit for you to mount.
De house is rick'ty, an' de barns an' stable's mos' fell down,
De fences is all busted an' a rottin' on de groun';
De niggers' changed for wuster, an' dey's lef' dis good ole place,
An' ob de things dat onct was our'n dars scacely lef' a trace.
My heart mos' break when Marster died, an' eber sence dat day
I larned to kno' dat I don't suit dese fokes new fashion way.
I lub dat cradle in de barn, I lub de ole time plow,

I don't like none de fangled things de 'ventions brung
us now.
De rose is drapped from off de poach, mos' dried up
is de spring—
Some ebil's come upon de lan' an' ruined eb'rything.
Hit 'pears to me de lan's got po', de skies ain't near
so blue,
Mos' eb'rything is ole or gone an' Isaac's gwine now
too.
De Sun's gwine down Marse Charley, ain't hit? So
hit 'pears to me.
Hit's gittin' dark in here, so dark, I scace kin hardly
see.
Whar's Nancy? Nancy git de light'ud an' make a
leetle light,
Marse Charley don't want set in here when hit's as
black as night.
You say you'se done hit, you'se done lit hit? Nancy
is you sho'?
Why, Honey, bless you, I cuarn't see no mo'n I could
befo'.

I'm feelin' coler too now, an' a chill's come in my bres',
I spec' dis is a sartin sign 'tain't long befo' my res'.

* * * * * * * * *

Is dat you callin' 'Poleyun, you'se gwine hab a dance to-night?
Dat's good! De clouds is gone by, an' de moon'll be shinin' bright.
We'll meet down by de cabin dar beneaf de big oak tree.
Unc' John will fetch his banjo, an' my Becky'll come wid me.

* * * * * * * * *

Yas Sar, yo' hoss is ready an' a standin' at de rack,
Marse Ran' done blowed his horn an' rid down yonder wid de pack.

* * * * * * * * *

Yas M'am, I see dem playin', dey's out yonder in de Sun;
I'se tole ole Nat, Yas M'am, he ses de dinner's almos' done.

* * * * * * * * *

'Pears like I'se been a dreamin' ob de ole days dat is pas',
I saw de ole fokes on de poach, de chilluns on de grass,
I yeard de banjo playin', an' I yeard de niggers sing
Dat song about de lowgroun's, an' I danced like eb'rything.
Ouch! Ouch, Marse Charley, dars a nawful mis'ry settin' in
My chist. My battle wid de inimy is gwine begin.
Lord Jesus, I is not afeered, I lubbed you all my life,
I larnt to from dat angel dat on erf was onct my wife.
I'm ready now to leab here, an' to come to you dis day.
I b'liebs in you, Lord Jesus, please wash all my sins away!
Marse Charley pray a prar for me; an' would you hole my hade?
I hilt Marse Ran' dat way when dem mean Yankees shot him dade.

Hit feels so good, Marse Charley. Dar! I hear de music's hum—

Good-bye Marse Charley, far—, farwell—. Rebeccy, I'se done come!

THE OLD SONG.

THE OLD SONG.

Down in the lowgrounds where the rustic cabin
stands,
And pines lean gaunt against the sky,
I hear again the weird carousing of the hands,
Their low and quaint old lullaby.
Moaning and crooning and strong,
Through the grove it sweeps along,
The low, sad, negro's song.

Again 'tis moonlight in a year long gone away—
The Summer breeze a perfume brings
From down the sleeping meadow sweet with new
mown hay,
And wastral chant of one who sings.
Moaning and crooning and strong,
Through the grove it sweeps along,
The low, sad, negro's song.

Now like the soughing wind, in solemn, rhymeless lay,
So soft and low and sad it swells;
Then stronger still the chorus bursts in sadder way,
As it some superstition tells.
Moaning and crooning and strong,
Through the grove it sweeps along,
The low, sad, negro's song.

Beyond the fields and woods the music fades and dies,
Then as inspired begins again;
The bending pines harmonious with their plaintive sighs
Blend kindly with the weirder strain.
Moaning and crooning and strong,
Through the grove it sweeps along,
The low, sad, negro's song.

O, night of year from out my happy past remain!
Come back from out those days, Old Song!
Sing softly, murmur, croon ye men its old refrain,
My memory holds it yet too strong.
Moaning and crooning and strong,
Through the grove it sweeps along,
The low, sad, negro's song.

MAMMY.

MAMMY.

Did you hear me praying Mammy when you heard
the angels' call?
I was sitting on the cricket near the staircase in the
hall.
They told me you were going to my mother over
there;
And I told the Lord I loved you in the mystery of
prayer.
I remember you, old Mammy, in the days of long
ago,
When a lad in many a mischief I poured out to you
my woe.
I remember well the hoe-cake that you gave me every
noon,
And the bed in which you put me every night, I
thought too soon.

I can still say "Now I lay me," which you nightly prompted then,
With the following petitions to the last word, and Amen.
And with crooning song you won me to the blessed rest of sleep;
My peace was yours, old Mammy, and when weeping you did weep.
Boy and man you loved me Mammy, man and boy I loved you too,
And the bond of love's own making binds me Mammy still to you.
They have told me in the graveyard you lie buried with the dead,
But I knew they were mistaken when to me these words they said.
For thy soul hath lifted upward, and on Nature's kindly breast
Thy worn body is contenting in the ministry of rest.
You have met again my mother in the meed of sacrifice,

And the angels at that meeting heard my name in Paradise.

I can hear you calling, Mammy, now from where the angels stay,

And I'm coming, dear old Mammy, when they show me, too, the way.

THE END.

JUL 22 1955

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 165 597 1